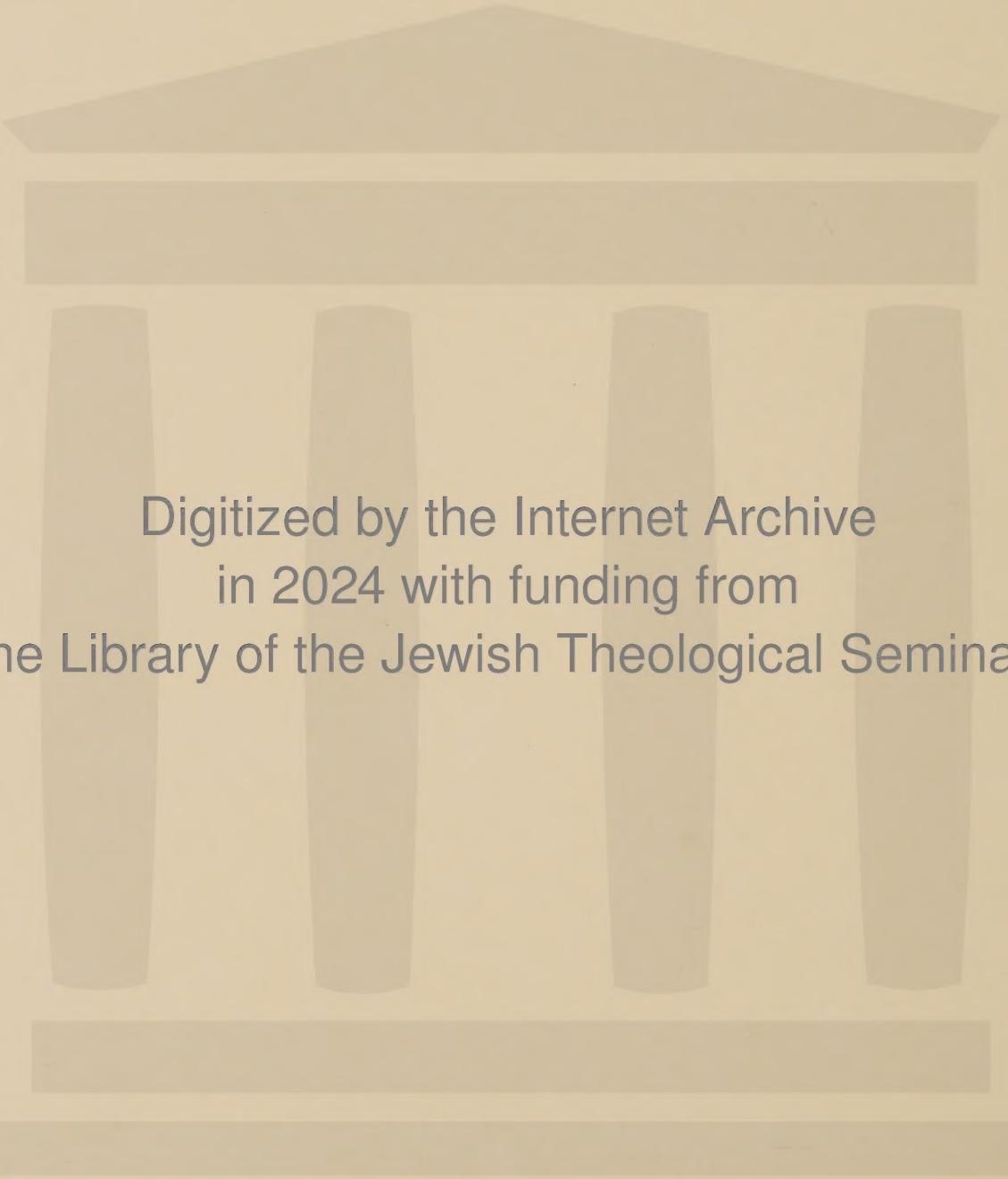


M. KAPLAN DIARIES - TRANSCRIPTIONS

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MIL DECEMBER 1928 JUNE 29



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of it. It is the most concrete symbol and exemplification of mutuality and cooperation that we have in human life. It is the most glorious defense mankind has invented against the common enemy death. Selling insurance is the cleanest business in the world. It offers the one who makes his livelihood through it the chance to be of real service to his patrons. If I were to be the founder of a new religion I would not ask of my followers as Jesus is said to have done, to renounce their possession and live on a communistic basis. I would simply adopt an efficient system of insurance against sickness and death. I wish I could persuade my Hadassah, who I believe has a head for business and a power of persuasion when it comes to practical matters, to take up the sealing of insurance as a calling.

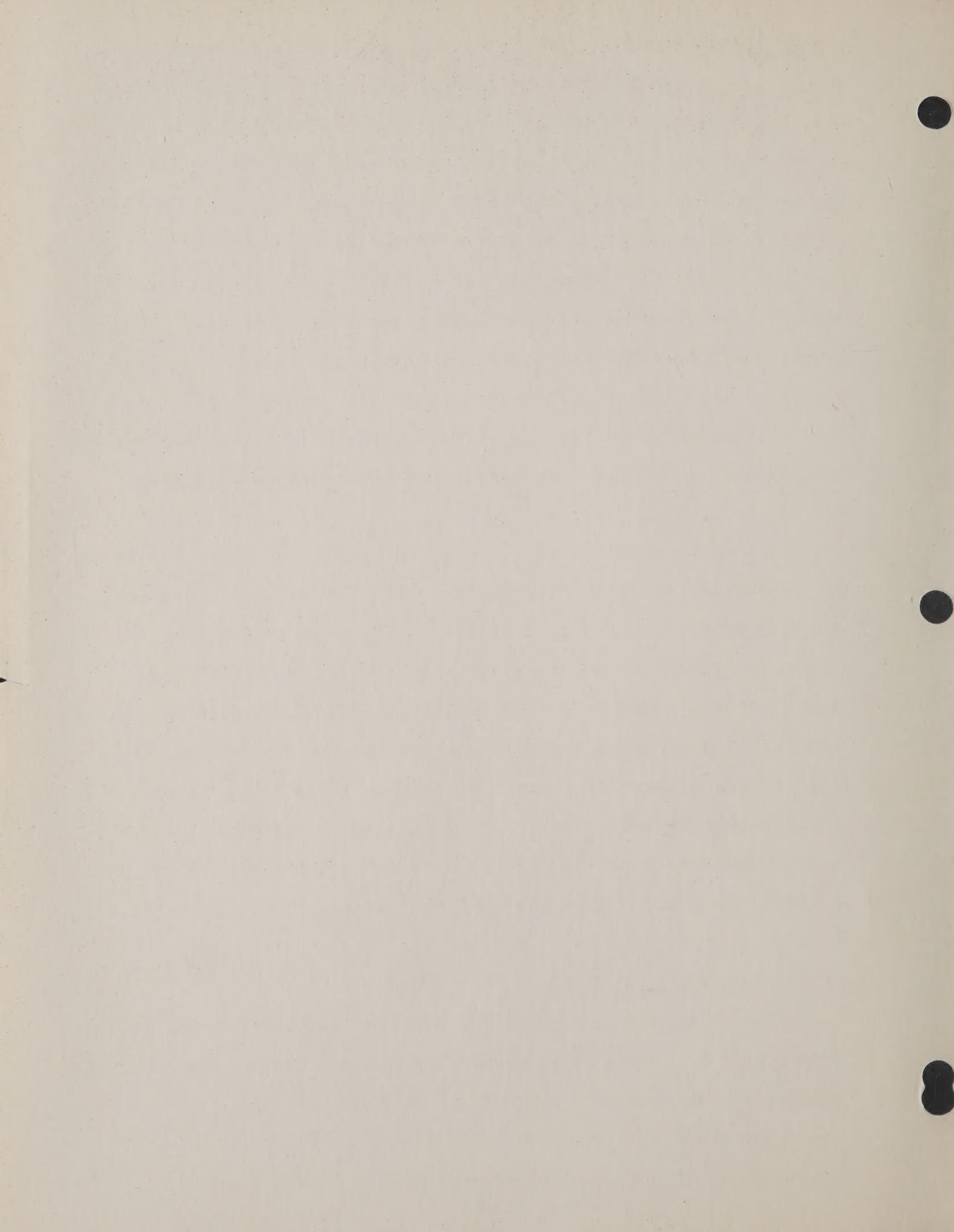
It is horrible to go through the agonies of death. I hope that the time is not far distant when it will be legitimate for an expert physician to grant the prayer of those who want to be spared such agonies and to prescribe for them some euthanasiac drug. I cannot see any possible justification for insisting that the victim of a mortal disease must endure the tortures of the damned. Of what good is he then to himself or to his family whose happiness is temporarily eclipsed. The dread of the sin of suicide is about as reasonable in a situation such as this as is the dread of the sin of murder in resorting to contraception to prevent pullulation.

* * * *

Friday, December 30, 1927

The foregoing paragraph was written just after I had seen my mother-in-law, Fruma Rubin, struggling against death. She died last Saturday night, December 25, the 2nd of Tebet at 9:15.

* * * *



Saturday, January 14, 1928

At the time I wrote down the above item I was going to describe some of the incidents in the closing days of my mother-in-law's life, the death bed scene, the funeral and the Shiv'ah Days following, but I was interrupted, and now I haven't the patience to go into those details. On the whole as I look back to the entire episode I feel that the shallowness of our living extends to our dying as well. It appears to me that even death makes no impression upon our type of people. And fool that I am I expect a sermon of mine to leave a lasting impression! Outside of the sense of loss experienced at the moment when ^{Dr. Kaplan} ~~Ira~~ pronounced my mother-in-law dead, next day when her body was taken into the SAJ House, and later when it was placed in the cold earth, it seems to me that her death in no way has made the least difference in the lives of all her children, except perhaps to give them a sense of relief, non-confessed, of course. I must admit that I was so struck by the fact that in her last conscious moments she repeated with all the fervor of her soul the prayer for universal peace and well-being, which she had been in the habit of doing throughout the greater part of her life, and by the further fact that she followed that with a conscious and deliberate pronunciation of the benediction $\text{p} \gamma \text{v} \text{v}$ before taking a sip of water, that I have not stopped thinking about the truly magic power of faith no matter how blind and uneducated that faith be. On the other hand I have since been puzzled as well. Since it is possible for faith to be so genuine and sincere as to constitute a source of strength in one's dying hour, why is it of so little help in adding to the joy of life? I do not recall that my mother-in-law was particularly cheerful or radiated any happiness as a result of her faith. Moreover, why did she hold on so desperately to life? Unless, probably, she believed literally that as soon as she died she would have to

her comfort some huge monstrous being whom she thought of as God. Is not this why R. Yohanan wept so bitterly when he was on his death bed?

Anyhow, while it is difficult to puzzle out the train of thought that goes on in the mind of the untutored person, it is no less difficult, in fact, much more so, to arrive at any definite idea of what the tutored mind should think concerning the fact of death. As for the agonies accompanying it, I for one would plead and beg that every one of us be spared. If I were to devise some Utopia of my own, I would provide it with an institution where those whose days are numbered and who wish to be spared the mental tortures which they and their relatives have to endure, could go and have themselves dispatched in short order. I almost begrudge such miserable criminals like the man and the woman who were executed because of the murder they committed in cold blood, the quick and beautiful death by ~~electrocution~~ electrocution. Why should good and worthy people whose last days are a hell on earth be denied such euthanasia?

And the "minyan!" What a useless institution! Imagine to what excellent social and spiritual purposes all that energy which goes into rushing early morning to daily services could be applied. If, for example, every time the mourners came together they were to read or recite something both instructive and inspirational, by the end of eleven months they might really be better for that experience. The stupidity and wastefulness of the human animal are even more conspicuous than those of inanimate nature.

Now to return to my own "dear" self. During the Shiv'ah week after my mother-in-law's death, I went to pay a condolence call to Prof. Marx who had lost his father. The time we pay such calls is usually toward dusk, so that we might help out the mourner with

Nishbēti

"minyan." Marx is strictly Orthodox in his mode of life. Accordingly when "minha" service was over he asked me to read a selection from the Mishnah. It is customary to select a "mishnah" beginning with one of the letters of the name of the departed. Opening at random I began to read from the treatise of Ketubot. I recalled the text quite well, but not having had occasion to read Hebrew out loud for a long time I wasn't sure at the moment whether the opening word for "I was captured" should be read with a "patach" or a "tsere." I was misled by the fact that the book in which I was asked to read had the word ^{NISHBAYTI} ~~NISHBATI~~ without a "yod" between the ~~sh~~ and the ~~Taf~~. Consequently I read it ^{nishbati} instead of ~~nishbati~~. This faux pax preyed on my mind for over a week. Of course it was the presence of Hoschander and Higger that made me painfully conscious of the mistake I had made. I myself would have found fault with both of them, if they had read the word the way I did. To me it would be an evidence of ignorance of elementary grammar. Hence I felt that what they probably thought of me was not too complimentary. This upset my equilibrium for a good many days.

A similar effect was produced on me by a question put to me by one of the students in the class last Wednesday which I could not answer. I happened to mention the opinion of the Rabbis with regard to the ineligibility of Gentiles to salvation. One of the students asked me to tell him where he could find the specific statement and I had to tell him that I did not remember it at the time. Unfortunately I have no memory for the exact "loci of quotations, nor do I seem to be able to master the rules of grammar. Accuracy - or rather the hard labor required to attain it, bores me. What's the use of looking for excuses? I might say, of course, that I have never had the proper training, or that my energies are dissipated into too many different directions. But I know all too well that all

such explanations are mere rationalizations. Anyhow, the fact remains that each such exposure of my weakness leaves me miserable for about two weeks.

And the SAJ, Gold bless it, what a p**267**! The chairman, H.H. Liebovitz has fallen down on his job. Either his sickness, the lack of encouragement in his Jewish endeavors from his "simp" of a wife, or his hard work in business is the cause of his being unable to do anything for the SAJ except preside at the occasional and pointless meetings of the Board. The members of the Society as a whole have demonstrated their lack of enthusiasm by the poor response to Liebovitz's appeal to take up the bond issue of \$75,000 at the rate of 4½% interest. Only about fifty thousand dollars has thus far been subscribed. The worst of it is that the members seem to be getting panic stricken and to begin saying that the SAJ is a failure. They have no fault to find with me. But the members are too old to become interested in a new venture of any kind, much less in one of a complex and spiritual character. There are very few, if any, under forty.

I myself am becoming so weak and flabby that I no longer wax indignant at the demoralized state of the SAJ. If I had any "guts" in me I would have kicked the whole thing over. If I had any self-respect I would have said to those who were assembled last Sunday night to hear me debate on What Is Religion? with a group of three raw, crude and unmannerly youngsters, "Ladies and Gentlemen, If this is the product of six years of my toiling with you, if you can not only sit patiently listening to such blasphemy and trash, and applaud it to the echo, you better change the name of this Society to the Society for the Prevention of Judaism and choose as your leader one of these young snotnoses.

But of course, I must pretend that I am enjoying the privilege



of being their spiritual leader, and smile like any ordinary salesman about town, even if he is kicked downstairs by the party he is trying to sell his wares to.

Today I gave, in the SAJ House, ^{part} ~~part~~ of the talk on Traditional Judaism that I am expected to give at Minneapolis on Jan. 25. Naturally I had to talk about God. Anyone not a moron, it seems to me, ought to have been able to understand what I had to say. And yet it called forth what to me is the ~~most~~ worst possible reaction. "Don't you think it was above the heads of the people? I, of course, understood the sermon, but I am afraid the others couldn't follow you." This intelligent remark from a highly vulgar, small brained, social ~~and~~ climber, the wife of a cloak manufacturer who has recently become bank president. I plead guilty to having taken these people seriously and having sent the husband telegrams of congratulations on his promotion from the vice presidency to the presidency of the bank. When it came to subscribing to the bond issue he did not buy one dollar's worth. The ~~xxxxxx~~ reason he gave was that not enough members patronized his bank.

***** * *

SUNDAY, January 15, 1928

Typical of the difference between the Rabbinical Assembly and the Central Conference of American Rabbis is the difference in the nature of the Halakic problems which they posed to their respective chief authorities on rabbinics. Dr. Ginzberg, who is the acknowledged "Gaon" of the Rabbinical Assembly was requested to give a "responsum" on the question whether grape juice was good enough for kiddush. Dr. Lauterbach, who is the Talmudic pillar of the Reform Rabbinate, was asked to give the Talmudic opinion on the question as to the use of contraceptives. (see last report of the CCAR).



A. P. Lubell and Mutterperl have of their own accord, and at the instigation of Jacob Kohn, been importuning some of the SAJ people to approve the merging of the SAJ with Kohn's congregation & the Anshei Chesed. There was already occasion for misunderstanding. Lubell quoted Joseph Levy to Kohn to the effect that I was opposed to the merger. Kohn called me up about it, but I got Levy to call up Kohn and nail the lie at once.

I have just now been reading Eduard Meyer's Geschichte des Altertum III. What a keen understanding he has of ancient Judaism. I have in my own mind become convinced of how true his characterization of Judaism is. "Donn dos ist ueberhaupt das Wesen des Judenthums: die hochsten and die abstossendsten Gedanken, das Grossartige und das Yemine begin unmittelbar nebeu einander, untrennbar verbunden, das eien inimer die Aehrseite des andern" (p.218). If the two are as "untreunbar verbunden" as he states, then Judaism is lost. In my own small way I am trying to tear the two apart and to repudiate the repellent elements in our spiritual heritage. If the Reformist movement had only been Jewish as well as Reformist how far we would have been advanced spiritually by this time. Of what use is all the liberalism in that movement and its rediness to repudiate the ancient spirit of exclusiveness and dogmatism, when one of the leading rabbis in this country- Maurice H. Harris - can with perfect equanimity get up in the rabbinical conference held last year and make a statement like the following: "During the last year I found a surprising interest of my people in subjects of Jewish concern. You know how often we have to be apologetic, when we bring a subject of Jewish interest, or shall I say Jewish non-interest, before our people - anything but that! We have to move carefully and walk softly when we approach our young people as to the advisability of some Jewish problem." (p. 270 Yearbook CCAR 1927.)

Thursday, February 2, 1928

On Tuesday, January 17 I attended the members' meeting of the SAJ. There were very few people at the meeting. I took occasion to upbraid them for the defeatist spirit which seems to have taken hold of the organization. It appears that the charge placed upon the seats for the holiday services as a means of meeting the deficit is extremely unpopular and has put a halt to the increase in members. Quite a few have resigned. Anyhow, things don't look quite so bright. After six years of existence the SAJ possesses no more than an equity of about \$25,000 in the building and a dissatisfied and half-disheartened membership with no one in sight to take hold of its affairs.

At the meeting the suggestion was made that I deliver my talk Sunday mornings instead of Saturday. I was rather in favor of the change. I would be willing to try anything to get the SAJ out of its present demoralized state. The matter was referred to a committee which is to report at the next ~~members~~ members' meeting scheduled for Sunday, Feb. .

On Wednesday, Jan. 18 as I was discussing a sermon with one of the seminary students, I suddenly felt the mucous membrane around the mouth becoming swelled. It distorted my mouth. As I looked at myself in the mirror I felt quite alarmed. I felt very much depressed at the thought that in one short moment all our best laid plans go up in the air because of something that goes wrong in our machinery. The fragility of health and the insecurity of life very often mar my peace of mind.

On Saturday, Jan. 21 Henry Hurwitz called on me. He spoke to me of a plan he had in mind to organize a school for Jewish studies

on lines analogous to those of the New School for Social Research. His opinion is that I made a mistake in withdrawing the resignation I had sent to the Seminary. So long as I am connected with the seminary my effectiveness is neutralized. In case he will get some funds for this school which he has in mind he would want me to sever my connection with the seminary and devote myself to teaching and writing in a spirit of complete freedom. I permitted myself to dream of such an eventuality, only to realize immediately after his leaving that it was only a dream. When I talked the matter over with Lena tshe gave me to understand that nothing less than the security of an endowed institution would be acceptable to her. She reminded me of my hostages to fate. I suppose she is right. My day is over.

I was far from being in a happy frame of mind when I left for Chicago on Sunday, Jan. 22 on my first lecture tour. As soon as I got on the train, however, I relaxed and began to read Aristophanes' Frogs in Gilbert Murray's translation. It acted like a sedative on my mind. I felt as though I had moved into a different world and breathed a freer air. What a relief from the morose and oppressive atmosphere of the Hebraic past and the Jewish present. How grateful we ought to be to the Greeks for having shown us that we can laugh at our gods! How we ought to bless those ancient Greeks for having had the good grace to disappear from the world! I came across the expression "humorless prigs." That hurt terribly. How well that described the Tannaim and Amoraim. If they only had a sense of humor'. I would have forgiven them the discussion whether or not it is permitted to walk out with a wooden leg or to kill lice on the Sabbath.



On Monday, Jan. 23 I stopped off for a few hours at Chicago. I spent the greater part of the time with the Dushkins. I talked to him about the advisability of forming an SAJ group and convening a number of rabbis, educators and social workers to draw up a working program for Jewish life. He was quite responsive to both suggestions.

I arrived at Kansas City on Tuesday at 10:25 and was met at the station by Rabbi Herman M. Cohen and the cantor of his congregation, a brother of Rabbi Samuel Cohen. They took me to the Mayfair Hotel and going in with me to the room I took they unfolded to me the story of their troubles with the congregation.

Saturday night, February 4, 1928

The Congregation Beth Sholom to which Herman Cohen was elected about years ago consisted of a group of quiet people who allowed themselves to be directed by their rabbi. Unfortunately an Orthodox group that had originally formed part of a larger body from which the Beth Sholom broke away began to make overtures to the Beth Sholom with the view of being ~~xxxi~~ reunited. Herman Cohen being anxious to have a larger synagogue and better facilities approved of the amalgamation. No sooner, however, did the amalgamation take place than his troubles began. The Orthodox group consists of a number of large families intermarried with each other. They are by nature trouble makers, never taking part in any of the activities or attending the services in the synagogue, but always present at meetings for the purpose of undermining the influence of the rabbi. The recently built synagogue cost about \$350,000. The mortgage amounts to \$200,000. The budget is about \$500,000. Although there is a membership of about 500 only a few take an active interest in the work of the congregation.

Had lunch with Herman Cohen. Met Mrs. Archibald Silverman who was traveling for the United Palestine Appeal and Hadassah. I confess I cannot understand what can take a woman of that kind away from her home for months to make propaganda for Zionism. It is not everywhere that she is welcomed. In fact she is very often rebuffed, especially by some of the chapters of the Council of Jewish Women. The anti-Jewish sentiment in many of those circles is very strong. All this she endures as a matter of course, as though her livelihood depended upon her work. If I am not mistaken she even pays her own fare, as she can well afford it. Is it the love of excitement or the pleasure of being listened to with attention and being applauded that draws her on? For I cannot believe that she has a profound understanding of Jewish life, and hence it cannot be that she is prompted altogether by idealistic considerations such as those that actuate a woman like Miss Szold.

At 7:00 P.M. dinner was served in the vestry of the synagogue to about fifty people. After the dinner this number was increased by about 100 who came for the lecture that I had been scheduled to give. Before my lecture there were some musical numbers and a short address by Mrs. Silverman. I gave my talk on Judaism as a civilization. Being in a rather happy frame of mind I managed to titillate the audience. The lecture was well received.

* * *

Monday, February 6, 1928

The following questions were asked of me after the lecture:

1. Will conservatism insist on the wearing of hats in the synagogue?
2. Is humanist the same as reconstructionist? 3. What is a mother to do to get her children to observe kashrut, "licht benschen" etc.?
4. Why do you designate your standpoint as humanist? 5. Is it better to stay away from services or to use the automobile on the

Zionist) of Detroit excusing himself for not having seen me that is day, although he/in some way officially associated with the Forum. In that letter he says that he received enthusiastic reports of the meeting I addressed. It seems, therefore, that from the standpoint of those who had charge of the meeting, it was fairly successful.

On the way from the meeting to the hotel I was in the same car with Rabbi Hershman. The car was being driven by Sackheim. It did not take long for me to get into a heated theological argument with Hershman. I found it well nigh impossible to pin him down to any definite views either fundamentalist or modernist. He kept on blowing hot and cold all the time. Together with the sophistry of his reasoning was the underlying assumption that very few people were qualified to understand the truth; therefore it ought to be given them in a form that would not lead them to suspect that there was anything wrong with tradition.

At the hotel, Kurland spent some time with me discussing the failure of Hershman to meet present day issues fully and frankly. I intimated that the group of people, who, according to Kurland found Hershman's attitude repellent, should organize themselves on the basis of a platform like that of the SAJ. Kurland seemed interested in the suggestion. I even had to promise him that I would answer his letters in case he wrote to me. So far I have not heard a word from him, nor from any of the people I had met on the trip and who had promised to communicate with me. Evidently Judaism is not a burning problem even with those who avow an interest in it.

In the evening I attended the annual dinner of the Detroit Federation, to which I had been invited by Waldman. It was the same kind of a function as the one I ^{had been} ~~was~~ present at, I believe, two years ago, when I was invited to deliver the address on Jewish education. There I met Weinheim, Brown (the) his mother and his sister, Friedberg,



(an old man, one of Hershman's body guards), Butzel, Alexander and Rabbi Franklin. Whatever one may say about the Reform rabbis they certainly possess *savoir faire*.

My next stop was Syracuse. I got there Monday, Jan. 30. I was met by Rabbi Friedman (Reform) and Rabbi Bienenfeld (Conservative). The meeting I was ~~scheduled~~ to address was to take place at Friedman's temple. Friedman had arranged a luncheon for me at the hotel where I stopped. About twenty-five men, members of the Temple for the most part, were present at the luncheon. The only one's that had fish instead of meat were Bienenfeld and I. The luncheon was preceded by a prayer in English given by Friedman in which he thanked God for the presence among them of a great scholar in Israel (sic!).

The greater part of the afternoon I spent in Bienenfeld's company. Together with him I visited the factory which turns out ornamental furniture of all kinds by means of a process whereby it is possible to imitate carved work on a large scale. The owners of the factory are the Holsteins. The father, who was originally a wood carver in Warsaw, worked in this country in a factory where he learned the secret process of manufacturing the synthetic wood. He left the employ of the inventor of the process and put up a ~~factory~~ factory of his own. The inventor, ^{not} having patented the process could not prosecute. He finally committed suicide. This is the story Bienenfeld hinted to me, adding that now the Holsteins are noted for their charity and interest in all Jewish undertakings.

What a dirty business the whole thing! And yet I had to keep on beaming on the old man as he showed me through his factory, and later in the evening when he pointed out to me his own hand carved pulpit in the Temple.

The lecture was preceded by dinner. Since the dinner was trefah I was given a dish of ~~meat~~ vegetables which I enjoyed immensely.

Somehow I was in a happy frame of mind that evening, and succeeded in holding their interest for well over an hour. The Temple people had invited the Men's Club of the Conservative synagogue. There were also some people from the strictly orthodox synagogue. There seems to be much less hostility among the various Jewish sects in Syracuse than in most other cities. The presence of these elements added to the piquancy of the discussion.

Rabbi Bienenfeld was the first to put questions when I was through with my talk. He asked: "Was not Judaism always subject to difference of opinion, e.g., Hillel and Shammai? Why then try to formulate a single program?" The others asked the usual type of question: "1. Is not Judaism as a culture a much weaker unifying bond than Judaism as a religion?" "2. Of what benefit to the world is it to intensify or Jewishness? "Would not assimilation lessen the occasion for friction? What text books have we to teach Judaism according to the new conception of it?" Rabbi Friedman closed the series of questions with a request that I explain my position on the Kol Nidrei.

On Sunday morning, Feb. 19 a members' meeting of the SAJ was held to discuss the advisability of inaugurating Sunday morning lectures. The meeting was very poorly attended. A committee consisting of Turell and Th. Schneider brought in a report favoring the innovation. I personally approved of the report, although it would ~~entail~~ entail considerable work on my part. But I am so restive and unhappy on account of the apathy that prevails in the Society that I am willing to try anything. Despite my approval, however, the report was not adopted, for fear that the Sabbath services would suffer if I were to omit the sermon and that the Sunday lectures might fail to draw large enough audiences.



The conference which I asked Dushkin to organize took place in Chicago on Tuesday and Wednesday Feb. 21 and 22. I arrived at Chicago on Tuesday morning and opened the conference with some remarks on the Question Wherein existing systems of Judaism were not satisfying.

Friday, March 23, 1928

I made it plain from the beginning that I did not want the discussion to be merely of an academic character but that it should lead to some plan of action. It was well that I said that because from what I learned later some one, I believe Kadushin, had suggested that they ~~had~~ keep the SAJ out of the discussion. I have a feeling that he like so many among my colleagues, balk at the idea of being identified with the SAJ. They regard the Society as a personal creation of mine, and therefore apprehend that with it back of me I might become domineering. Moreover they claim that so far the SAJ is the name for nothing more than the local congregation to which I am ministering. As soon as I discovered that Dushkin had been diverted from the original purpose of establishing an SAJ branch, I began arguing him back to it. Of course that was done between sessions. During these discussions with him I became clear in my own mind just what the status of the group that was meeting in conference should be. It was then and there that we evolved the plan of an SAJ council to consist of rabbis, directors of social work, educators. Later I suggested the inclusion of men and women of creative ability who would subscribe to the SAJ program.

The discussions were taken down in shorthand. Therefore I do not think it necessary to record them here.

Tuesday evening I addressed a large gathering - over three hundred people - of representatives of the conservative and reform congregations on the subject of the Relation of the Congregation to the Communal Problem of Jewish Education. The conservative and



reform congregations have been federated by the Bureau of Jewish Education (Dushkin) for the purpose of improving their religious schools. The Bureau helps those schools by standardizing their curricula, providing them with qualified teachers, etc. This was the second annual dinner held by the representatives of the federated congregations. Last year they were addressed by Benderly who, I understand, left a deep impression upon them. The audience was very much pleased with the talk I gave.

* * *

Wednesday, April 12, 1928

It seems like a century since last I wrote in this book. The longer the period during which I fail to record my experience the harder I find it to resume the practice. But I must keep up this diary. It is the only evidence I have that I have existed. I need it to counteract the feeling of blankness with which I am often seized. My past is as though it was not so that I feel forced to turn the pages of the diary to convince myself that I have lived. I sometimes feel that we don't have to die to know what death is -- in fact, it is then that we don't know. The time that we know it is when we are alive and we try to keep our own past from dying; yet no matter what we do it dies on our hands.

I have been very much in the dumps of late. The longer I live the more alone I feel. I have not a single ~~fix~~ friend or companion in the world with whom I can share my interests and problems. What can wife and children do for me? They have their own lives to live. Of course they love me and I love them. But all they can do is to sympathize with me. What good can sympathy do me? In all the years that I have worked in the field of Judaism I have not succeeded in finding anybody who would be willing to collaborate with me on any project for the advancement or reconstruction of Judaism. So



could be made of the latent good in the Jewish heritage, yet it is allowed to go to waste. Some of the sermons I develop enable me to uncover veins of spiritual gold. Each time I come upon such a discovery I thrill with joy. To whom shall I announce the good news? A handful of simple untutored men and women who constitute my audience at the SAJ Services? For the moment I manage to forget how dull and lethargic they are. I delude myself into believing that they will receive with joy the news of the meaning I have discovered in life or in a text and, who knows, perhaps even act on it. No sooner am I through speaking than the seals fall from my eyes. When the services are over they don't even take the trouble to bid me "Gut Shabbos" or "Gut Yom Tov." It is only when they get to the door and happen to turn around and see me standing near them that some of them give me their clammy handshakes and fishy looks.

Taking a walk tonight with Lena and feeling depressed as my mind revolved on these thoughts it occurred to me I might be able to shake off this mood of mine by stopping in at the Century Theatre to listen to a musical comedy. But I was almost bored to death by what went on on the stage and had to leave during the first part of the performance. Coming back I resumed reading Willa Cather's Death Comes for the Archbishop. When I came across a passage which expressed my present state of mind more accurately than I could hope to with my half articulate style I was moved to take up the pen and to write down what was passing through my mind right now. Here is the passage:

"He was lying in bed with the sense of failure clutching at his heart. His prayers were empty words and brought him no refreshment. His soul had become a barren field. He had nothing within himself to give his priests or his people. His work seemed superficial, a house built upon the sands. His great diocese was still

a heathen country. The Indians travelled their old road of fear and darkness, battling with evil omens and ancient shadows."

In the effect which this paragraph had upon me I experience the value of art. This passage gripped me, or rather it enabled me to take a firmer hold of myself. The ancients had an idea that to know the name of a thing or person was to be in a position to exercise control over that thing or person. Somewhat akin seems to be the work of art. It points describe and articulate the innermost aspects of the environment and of our own natures, thereby enabling us to put them under our control.

The particular passage which had such a momentary therapeutic effect on my mind reveals to me a very interesting fact. It shows that discouragement need not arise necessarily from doubt as to the intrinsic value of the work that one may be doing. The main source of such discouragement seems to be the apparent futility of one's efforts, the failure to make an impression. For surely, the Bishop in question never for a moment questioned the divine truth or the intrinsic value of what he had to offer the people. Withal that, he was disheartened, because his efforts seemed to bear no fruit. Likewise in my own case, I have not the least doubt as to the intellectual and spiritual superiority of the doctrine I advocate to any of the current conceptions of Judaism. But the greater the conviction in my own mind, the more maddening the apathy and stupidity of our people.

Now that I have gotten myself to pick up this diary once again I might as well note down the few occurrences that I don't want to slip my mind. They are as follows:

1. On Feb. 17 (Friday) there appeared the first printed issue of the SAJ Review. The Board of the Trustees of the SAJ authorized ~~for~~ the printing of the Review at a meeting held on

Monday, Feb. 6. This is one of the few instances in which I carried out a decision with alacrity. So far the Review has been running smoothly, although it means a good deal of additional work for me, I believe that it is worth while. Fortunately the defrayment of the expense has been provided for by the selling of tickets for a concert at the Metropolitan. The amount realized was about \$2400.

2. On March 19 (Monday) the graduates of Wise's Institute had me take lunch with them at Trotzky's for the purpose of discussing the question whether I would undertake to organize them under the aegis of the SAJ. John Teffer who is a graduate of the Institute and who has been doing work with the children and young people of the SAJ congregation had told me of the desire of the graduates to meet me. When I listened to what they had to say I was taken somewhat aback by the rather crude and materialistic reason advanced for their not wishing to be affiliated with the CCAR. By being identified with the Conference they would assume the obligation of supporting the Hebrew Union College. I overlooked, however, this crudity and proceeded to explain where they could fit in in the organization of the SAJ, namely as members of the SAJ Council.

3. A few weeks ago I became acquainted with Dr. F. Schneersohn. He is the scion of a long line of Hassidic Rabbis. The pamphlets which he sent me deal with a new psychologic approach to the problem of human life. For once I read through literature sent me. If a man with his ideas could somehow be gotten to teach the men who are training for the ministry I am confident he would render them more qualified to deal with the human aspect of their calling.

4. On Monday, April 9 the Board of Trustees of the SAJ accepted my suggestion to designate the organization as the congregation of the SAJ. I hope now that the possibility of organizing chapters will be much greater than when the group of 150 members was

identified in people's minds as the SAJ. The original form of organization prevented the SAJ from developing into a popular movement.

5. Wise wrote me an approval of the first two editorials which appeared in the SAJ Review of April 4.

6. Dr. Weitzman lunched with me and the family yesterday (the seventh day of Pesah.) He had promised to come to the services at 10:30. He came, however, about 11:15 after I had begun to speak and the janitor would not permit him to go in while I was speaking. After lunch he asked my advice as to what should be done with the ZOA now that it was being violently attacked by the Brandeis group. I reiterated my suggestion of last year that the movement be directed by a lay body which should employ the professional Zionists to do the actual work. He thought that I was right.

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SATURDAY NIGHT, SUNDAY MORNING, April 14-15, 1928 (3:15 A.M.)

In putting down the various matters of interest that transpired within the last two weeks I forgot to mention the negotiations between the Anshei Hesed people and members of our Board to effect an amalgamation. A few weeks ago on Saturday an informal conference took place at Kohn's house. He had with him Mutterperl, Zinke, A. P. Lubell and his treasurer whose name escapes me just now. I brought with me Harry Liebovitz, Joseph Levy and Unterberg. Goldin, the president of the United Synagogue, or rather a mere pretext of a president, was also there. I must say I behaved very well. I made out a plausible case for amalgamation, although my heart was not in compliance with what I said. To this day I have not had a chance of learning how Liebovitz and Unterberg were impressed by the conference. The members of Kohn's committee were extremely urgent. Personally I also felt and still feel that if Kohn were not the terrible egotist that he is the amalgamation would have been advantageous to both of us.



But I simply cannot bear his dictatorial and dogmatic manner. He never gets together with me but always becomes the instructor. This evening meeting him at theatre, I asked him what he thought of the report of the conference. His ^{reply} was "I don't like it at all." He resented the criticism of the conservative group and objected to the SAJ's setting itself up as a fourth party. I told him that the objection to the conservative outlook was due principally to the fact that in common with Orthodoxy and Reform it viewed the problem of Judaism mainly as a synagogue problem; although from the synagogue point of view, the SAJ naturally ^{favored} ~~had~~ the conservative tendency in preference to Orthodoxy and Reform.

Friday I received a letter from Rabbi Maxwell Sachs on behalf of the graduates of the JIR asking me to meet them to discuss their affiliation with the SAJ. I really am very much perplexed. In case I will enter into relations with Wise's men I might get myself disliked by the graduates of the Seminary.

I have been seriously considering of late dropping the whole business of the SAJ including the Review. In my talks with ^{Lea} about this subject which we have discussed times innumerable, she seems to approve of my taking this step. But I am very much afraid that if I were to discontinue my SAJ work I might remain without an important source of spiritual vitamins. It is true I am very much at sea about the whole problem and in addition am getting tired of putting in so much effort without getting any response. Would to God that I knew what to do.

* * *

Wednesday, April 18, 1928

There are one or two remarks Weitzmann made when he was at my house on Pesah which I wish to record. He said that of the five million dollars contributed by Rosenwald toward the colonization

scheme, two million were for the colonization scheme and three million against Palestine. He ascribed Rosenwald's antagonism to Palestine to the ~~fact~~ disappointment in the agricultural experiment carried on there by Aaron Aaronsohn whom he characterized as half a charlatan. Moreover Rosenwald happened to have ~~been~~ to have come to Palestine at the same time that Baron Rothschild happened to visit it. The Palestinians paid little attention to Rosenwald. That has rankled Rosenwald's mind ever since.

Expressing his disgust at the numerous banquet speeches he has to listen to Weitzmann quoted some in a New England town introducing him as follows: "I tell you on my word of honor that Weitzmann is greater than Moses."

This afternoon Isaac Berkson called. He came back recently from Palestine where he was appointed director of education. I learned from him that there are about 18,000 Jewish children in the schools being educated at a cost of £ 112,000, of which £ 55,000 is supplied by the Zionist organization, £ 20,000 by the government and £ 24,000 by the Yishub. The difference is evidently the deficit.

As to the people in Palestine, the only way to deal with them is to regard them as abnormal, and to look upon Palestine as a large psychopathic ward. The general mental disease with which they are afflicted is infantilism. The Z.O. is the mother in the case. They have no sense of reality. If they experience any need they are sure that the means to its satisfaction can be found. Should they be asked an opinion about any matter, it will always be colored by their personal or class interest. No individual ever thinks of himself as an individual but as representative of the nation, or if not of the nation at least of the group. A person who claims to be impartial or objective is either suspect or secretly furthering his own interest or as a freak. Berkson explained that this self-

identification with a group is essential to the self-preservation of the individual, because of the limited economic opportunities. The sense of honesty is rather dull, especially among the so-called religious group. There is no such feeling as communal spirit. If a tax will be placed upon a community for educational purposes, the rich are apt to put up their own schools and make it impossible for the poorer element to educate their children.

* * * *

Friday, April 20, 1928

Little as I can afford the time I cannot refrain from recording the devastating effect on my spirit of the facts which I learned from Melville I. Rappaport of the Merit Employment Bureau. The difficulties experienced by Jewish young people who try to find employment are indescribable. At every agency the applicant is expected to state his religion. As soon as they state that they are Jewish they are told that no position can be gotten for them. In some agencies they actually tear up the application as soon as it is filled out by a Jew. Jewish firms often insist upon getting Christian help. A huge organization like the General Motors will not employ Jews. When Rappaport applied to the N.Y. Foundation (Warburg, Schiff, Lehman, et al) for a loan of \$2000 the one who prevented that loan from being made was Lee K. Frankel. The Insurance Co. of which he is vice president hardly has any Jews in its employ. Rappaport showed me cards made out by Jewish applicants in other agencies than his own. On those cards they are registered as of "Catholic" or "Gentile." One said she was of French religion.

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Wednesday, April 25, 1928

This was a rather strenuous and interesting week. Sunday night I participated in the tenth anniversary dinner of the Jewish Congress.

I accepted Stephen Wise's invitation to deliver an address at that dinner long before he came out with his resignation from the ZOA. I did not care to back out after having accepted the invitation, especially after what I did to him last year. As a rule I am very ill at ease whenever I have to speak on such occasions. This was no exception. I spent more time in preparing the talk than the occasion warranted. That itself is a source of annoyance to me.

When I came to the Astor Hotel I found a handful of people. Wise and Mack no sooner saw me than they took me to task for the recent editorial in the SAJ Review in which I spoke of them as "secessionists" and in which I said that Zionists had no right to secede. When we sat down I found myself between Mack and Wise on my left and Louis Newman of San Francisco on my right. Before taking our seats Wise made an insinuating reference to my action of last year. "Perhaps we may elicit another promise from him" or some such remark. Mack at once engaged me in a conversation by asking me whether I was satisfied with conditions at the Seminary and whether I intended to remain there permanently. Instead of answering either question categorically in the affirmative, I replied by telling him that conditions have not changed materially as far as I was concerned, but that I found compensation in the ability to go on with the SAJ work. I referred of course to the organization of the council. "But," I added, "I was interested in the JIR independently of any part that I might play in it. I should like to see it become what I would have made of it, if I had the opportunity." I then went on telling him that I considered the "continental" policy which the JIR followed in imitation of the Seminary and HUC a mistake.

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Thursday, April 26, 1928

In my opinion the JIR should have had a radically different curriculum, one in which the study of religion, ethics, psychology

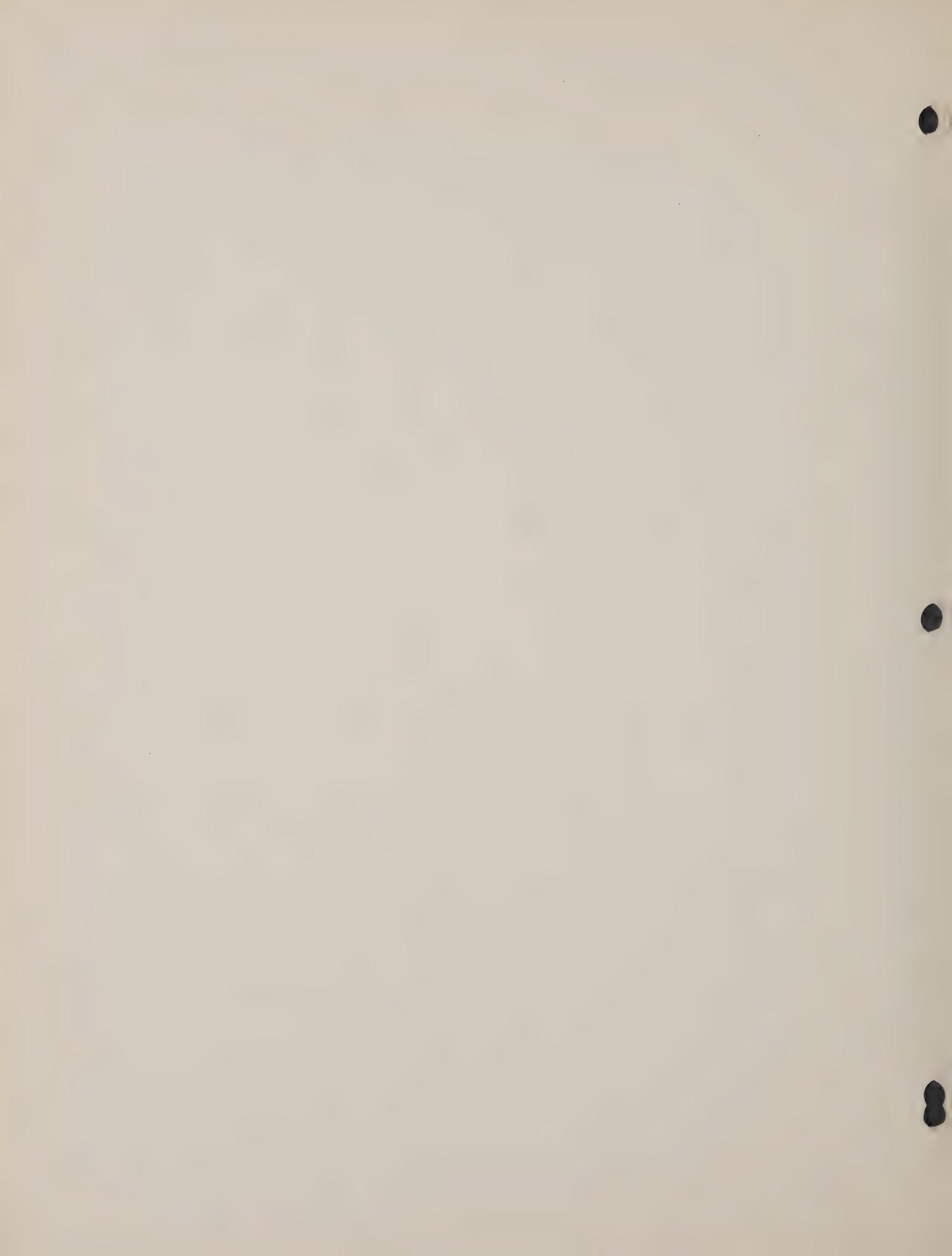
and sociology predominated. I expressed my agreement with an article by Kallen on Jewish Education which appeared some time ago in the Menorah Journal.

Mack repeated to Wise all that I had said about the JIR. Wise added that Dr. Wolfsohn of Harvard likewise suggested the elimination of the courses in Talmud and advised instead a thorough knowledge of modern Hebrew as more essential. Wolfsohn it seems would give first place to the study of Jewish philosophy. "But," added Wise, "who could have the courage to break with the traditional curriculum. A man like Ginzberg who is the most learned Jew in the world could afford to introduce so radical a change. If I were to do it, I would have all the Rabbonim and Rabbis tear me to pieces."

The address I made was not bad. I made one very bad mistake in grammar. I said "of such as me." that mistake haunted me until today.

The second novel experience this week was taking part in the oral examination of Rabbi Benjamin Cohen for the doctorate at Columbia. Benjamin Cohen is one of the recent graduates of the Seminary. He is ambitious to go in for scholarship. He is assistant librarian to Marx and is instructor in Talmud. He possesses a good deal of erudition, having studied Talmud daily for the last ten years and having read extensively in the works on Juedische Wissenschaft. He has been at work for many years on the Tosefta and handed in as his thesis a detailed study of Tosefta Shabbat comparing it with the Mishna Shabbat.

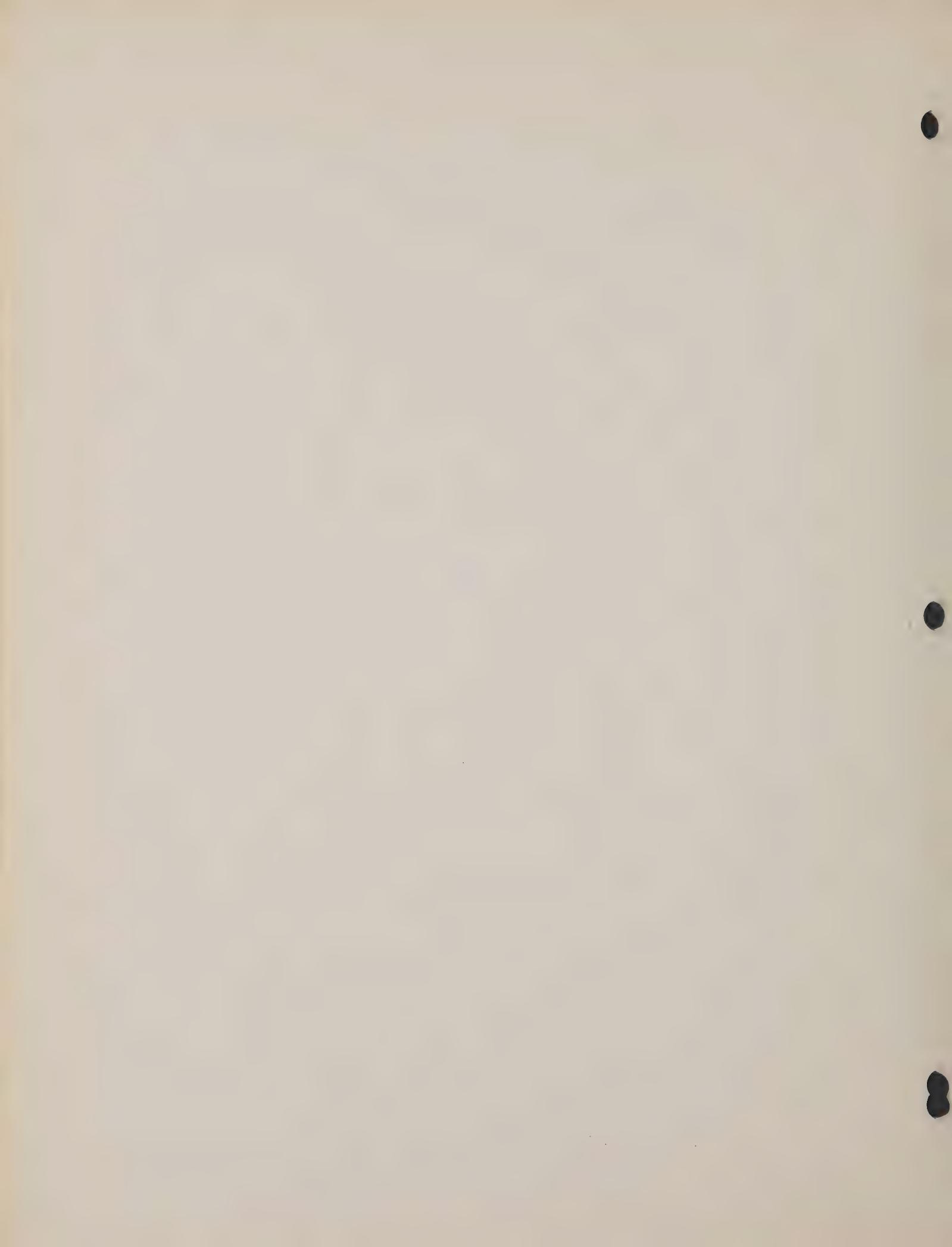
Last week I found in the Seminary a note from Columbia asking me to participate in the oral examination of Benjamin Cohen. I also found a copy of Cohen's Thesis which I was asked to share with Ginzberg. I was taken off my feet. How do I come to take part in examin-



ing a candidate for the Ph.D. when I myself haven't the degree? Moreover, what do I know of the subject with which the thesis dealt? Tremblingly I asked Ginzberg whether it was necessary for me to attend. I thought I might take advantage of the fact that the examination hour was the same as that on which I was scheduled to teach Midrash. On the other hand, I was ashamed to insist upon staying away, thereby betraying my fear that I was unqualified to act as examiner. As late as last Friday I was going to call up Gottheil to ask him to exempt me from being an examiner. But I held back, and made up my mind to go through with the ordeal, no matter what happened. I at once got busy reading up on the subject. Unfortunately the need of preparing sermons - I had to give an additional sermon at the YMHA Friday night - and the address at the Jewish Congress banquet - prevented me from buckling down to work on the subject of the Mishnah-Tosefta. I managed however to get in a good deal of reading, and by the end of two days I knew enough to heckle a professor on the subject.

I really enjoyed reading Rosenthal on the Mishna. The man has "Schwung." What I learned from him will come in very handy in the work that I am doing on "Judaism in the Making." I worked out the first chapter of Cohen's thesis and realized that it was all a lot of guesswork - from which I concluded that guesswork was guesswork whether it is microscopic or telescopic.

At last the morning of the ordeal came. I could hardly have felt more nervous if I were the candidate to be examined. When I arrived at the Trustees Room where the examination was to take place I found Professors Gottheil and Gavain. Soon after that Ginzberg arrived and then Tschernowitz and Baron of the JIR. Gottheil began by saying that as he did not consider himself an authority on the subject he had invited us to be present, and then put a number of simple questions to Benj. Cohen. He then called upon Ginzberg.



Noting the type of questions Ginzberg put I became easy in my mind. Uottheil then asked Gavain to interrogate Cohen. My turn came next and then Tschernowitz and Baron. I surely thanked God when that was over.

I forgot to mention that I probably owe this invitation to take part in the examination to the fact that I am to teach next year at Columbia.

The artist Pilichowski called on me today. He is in trouble financially and wants me to interest my friends to buy some of his pictures. Poor Pilichowski!. Poor me! What can I do for him with that bunch of dead heads. Yet everybody is of the impression that all I have to do is to send the members of the SAJ a note and they would at once comply with any request that I might make of them. This is the impression that Hertz, Chief Rabbi of England gave Pilichowski.

Yesterday I attended O'Neill's play "Strange Interlude." By the time I got to the intermission I realized that O'Neill dramatized in that play the need for transvaluation of values. Instead, however, of doing what Nietzsche did, and attempting or suggesting the overthrow of the moral law, O'Neill is interested in subordinating it to the creative instinct. Religiously this transvaluation would imply the conception of God as more truly expressed in the mother principle than in any of the cold metaphysical abstraction of the theologies. It has occurred to me since that O'Neill's underlying philosophy seems to be the same as that of Havelock Ellis by whom he was no doubt influenced in his whole world outlook.

I saw the play with Judith. She has the kind of a mind that is challenging and provocative. Some of the most fruitful thoughts



I have hit upon are due to conversations I had with her. If she goes to Chicago next year, as I believe she will, I shall certainly miss her.

* * * * *

Sunday, April 29, 1928

Last night Judith engaged me in a lengthy conversation about her going to Chicago. It seems that the effect of her trip to Chicago has been to rob her attempt to make her way in the world alone of all the glamor that the thought of such an attempt had previously possessed for her. Moreover as a result of her learning the nature of the work that she would have to do, the horizon of possibilities seemed to narrow instead of widen. These doubts were supplemented by one which I shared with her, namely whether it was advisable for her to throw herself entirely into Jewish work with the demand for Jewish culture being so limited. This is the doubt which forever gnaws at my heart. Why seek to impose on the public something it does not genuinely want? Why, then, should I sacrifice her future and her happiness to a purpose of doubtful value? Of course, if I could see the least indication of the demand for Judaism waxing instead of waning, I should not hesitate to advise her to confine herself to Jewish work. So far, however, I have found that only those who have a vested interest in Judaism are anxious to see it live. The handful of laymen who have the future of Judaism at heart are the fundamentalists. I have yet to meet an enlightened Jewish layman who would go out of his way to insure the existence of Judaism in this country by means of a deliberate effort at constructive re-adjustment.

Judith and I arrived at the conclusion that it would be best for her to establish a private studio. She could get a position in the school system. That certainly holds out no attractions. The room for initiative and originality is extremely circumscribed. In

addition she would have to train the children for Christmas and Easter celebrations in which she could not put in her whole heart.

This is the paradox of all social work, that the only value of going into it is to use it for the purpose of changing the social mind and social habits. But how can one do that who has to depend for his living upon the people who engage him with the view of maintaining the status quo?

Last Friday afternoon Dr. Wechsler, an eminent neurologist and a member of the ~~new~~ medical faculty at Columbia, called on me. The first time I saw him was when he spoke as "an intellectual" at the "Menorah discussion" a year ago last January, on the problem of "The Rabbis and the Intellectuals." He impressed me then as very clever but as to his interest in Jewish life, I gathered that it was of the negative variety. It was, therefore, with great surprise that I learned that he came to discuss with me the present situation in the Zionist organization. His coming was largely at ^{the} suggestion of Dr. Weitzmann, due probably to the fact that the plan which he has in mind is practically the same as I laid before Weitzmann and Lifsky a year ago, and which I reiterated recently in my talk to Weitzmann.

This morning I went to hear Krass speak on O'Neill's play "Strange Interlude." I was interested to hear what he had to say, because I might have to speak on that play myself. Krass reduced the play to a text for a series of Sunday School lessons. He missed the point of the play entirely. That such superficial mindedness should command the most influential Jewish pulpit in America is, indeed, deplorable.

Wednesday, May 2, 1928

For the last two or three weeks I have been struggling to say something interesting about Malachi. Each time I would sit down to write the time would pass without my getting hold of some idea that might render the texture of his ideas meaningful. The week before last my mind was ~~xx~~ taken up with questions about Mishna and Tosefta. I therefore could not concentrate on the task I had set before myself of writing the article on "Malachi". But I have been no more successful since. I found plenty of books and articles to distract my attention. My latest mental flirtation is "Strange Interlude." I cannot, however, allow another week to pass without the article being written up. The phrase "he was ~~without~~ indolent with the irremediable laziness of active folk" which I came across the other day in Paxton Hibben's biography of Beecher has frightened me as though I looked into a mirror and discovered that I was haggard and pale. The years are passing swiftly and I still do not see any books of mine being published. Only today Eisenstein asked me in class "When will you have your book published?"

Why am I writing all this? I have been sitting over an hour brooding on the subject of the article like a chicken sitting on an egg that refuses to be hatched. I said to myself, under the influence probably of O'Neill's method in "Strange Interlude" where he has the character think aloud, "Why allow the thoughts that pass through your mind to flit through and leave no trace behind? After all the ideas that come to you - and quite a few of them are interesting and worthwhile - deserve a better fate than that of an abortive death." Just now I feel that I have a real interesting idea concerning ~~Mr~~ Malachi and yet I find myself impotent to give it articulation, substance.

What I want to explain is that the contents of the little book of Malachi point to the beginnings of the struggle between Orthodoxy and Heterodoxy. Such strife is characteristic of Judaism only from the time it became the Judaism of tradition. In the religious phases of the Jewish life or of the life of Israel before the fifth century, there was no occasion for heresy in the usual sense of the term. Heresy is a phenomenon which indicates that the religion of a people has reached a reflective and self-conscious stage. It is then that religion gives rise to theology.

The end of the fifth century seems to mark the beginning of theological affirmation in Judaism. It is true that we find expressions of doubt and questioning that belong to earlier periods. Jeremiah seems to have been troubled by the problem of evil. The anonymous prophet who argued "Who created these things?" was probably answering some questions. But not till the end of the fifth century did the process of reflection on traditional conceptions assume serious proportions. Those who began to question what had been thitherto accepted as axiomatic were sufficiently numerous to constitute an audience for the few who began to develop a literature of questioning and perhaps even of heresy, etc. etc.

By this time I believe I have effected a take off. The objective treatment of the foregoing ideas does not belong in this book. Vale!

I have actually managed to keep on writing for about an hour and a half, so that the article for the SAJ Review which is two weeks overdue is beginning to take shape.

This morning I received two letters which made me feel good. One was from Bernard G. Richards in which he refers to the address I gave at the Congress anniversary dinner as "very splendid." I was, of course, prepared for a message of significance, but your very

illuminating and comprehensive analysis of the situation even exceeded our expectations." Of course I have no illusions as to the merits of the address despite Richards' flattering remarks. But as far as Richards is concerned, does he really mean it, or is it a forerunner of a new request?

The other letter was from Henry Hurwitz in reference to the Dinner meeting of the Board of Governors of the Menorah, which I attended last Monday night. Among the persons present were Stroock (brother of Sol Stroock) and apparently more human than he^(unr), Littauer .. ~~(the man who endowed the chair occupied by Wolfsohn at Harvard), Strauss, head of the mortgage firm of that name, Thurman, Aaron Sapiro, Horowitz (lawyer) of Boston who was president of the Menorah society in Harvard when I gave the course of Menorah lectures there in 1913 and a few others.~~ Littauer who, by the way said that it was fifty years since he was graduated from Harvard, stated in the course of his remarks that the reason the Menorah work with the undergraduates had suffered a setback in the last few years, was that it lacked a spiritual objective. This remark seemed rather strange, coming from a man who said that that was the first time he had participated in a meeting for a distinctly Jewish purpose. I then explained in calm and dignified fashion that the Menorah was performing a great spiritual service ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ in doing what no other institution in Jewish life was doing, humanizing the content of Judaism. It was probably with reference to this point that Hurwitz wrote in his letter to me "I am most grateful to you for your attendance at our Board meeting last evening, and for your gallant talk which made a profound impression. This time I feel that I deserved the *prize*." *pls 76*

Incidentally, I want to record that the dinner at the ^{Harvard} club was quite trefah. Horowitz who noticed that I was not eating

insisted upon my ordering something I could eat, which I did.

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Thursday, May 3, 1928

This afternoon I met with a committee of alumni of the JIR. The committee consisted of Rabbis Joshua Goldberg of Flushing, Maxwell Sachs of Brooklyn, Reichel of Newburgh and John Tepper. We discussed the question of association with the SAJ. I advised them not to wait till I am ready to organize an eastern council of the SAJ, explaining to them frankly that the organization of such a council was beset with difficulties by reason of the fact that the orthodox members of the Rabbinic Assembly were violently opposed to such a council in the East. The best thing for them to do was to organize themselves as an SAJ chapter.

Just before I met this committee I learned from Jacob Grossman that he had told Louis Finkelstein when he saw him at the United Synagogue Convention in Synagogue of my intention to organize an Eastern council. When Finkelstein heard it he flew into a rage. So long as the council was confined to the midwest and its discussions remained academic he did not mind. But now that the SAJ was going to assume form and take action, it was time to put a halt to the mischief that, according to him, I was spreading.

This evening I listened to a discussion of "Strange Interlude" which took place at the Community Church. Mrs. Block, the reader of plays for the Theatre Guild, Miss Hunt and John Haynes Holmes took part in the discussion. Very little - in fact, nothing - was said about the thought content of the play. Holmes discoursed eloquently for forty minutes on the use of the asides, or insides as he termed them, proving that they were nothing more than the old idea of the chorus, the episode and the soliloquy. I was disappointed at

the way they ignored completely the ideas - and in my opinion very much worth while ideas - O'Neill was struggling to express in the play.

This noon I addressed a group of students under the auspices of the Menorah society at CCNY on the "Future of Religion." I should judge that there were over 75 men. The questions asked were the most intelligent and relevant I have been asked by a general audience for a long time.

The pity of it that with all such agencies as claim to be doing Jewish work among the students, the Menorah, the Hillel, the United Synagogue, there can not be found a single person to give two hours a week to the thousands of Jewish students who attend the college. If I were of the right stuff would I not lay everything else aside and do just that very thing? And yet there is that phrase about "the irredeemable laziness of active folk" haunting me. To spend time with the boys at CCNY would be another way of postponing the literary tasks which I should have completed ten or fifteen years ago, if I were not such a dawdler.

Vol 4 -

writer,

Volume IV - (May 10, 1928-April 13, 1929)

"Allston liked to collect quotations that defined his own feelings"
(copied from Van Wyck Brooks "Opinions of Oliver Allston") Feb 1, 1942

"Our faith comes in moments; our vice is habitual. Yet there is a depth in those brief moments which constrains us to ascribe more reality to them than to all other experiences." Emerson

"Get acquainted with yourself."

"Let the living live; and you, gather together your thoughts, leave behind you a legacy of feeling and ideas; you will be most useful so." Amial

"Seek seeker in thyself: submit to find

In the stones bread, and life in the blank mind." Clough

"In der Beschränkung zeigt sich erst der Meister." Goethe

"A psychological tableau."

"Casanova with no very conscious desire for fame wrote (about himself) to outwit the horror of boredom: Stendhal, unsure of everything outside himself, to hold together a most volatile ego; Tolstoi, suffering a climatic upheaval, to escape the thraldom of his repressed sexuality." Angus Burrell in The Nation,

April 10, 1929

Thursday, May 10, 1928

It's a long time since I have been so at peace with myself and the world as I have been these last few days. The following circumstances have contributed to my present state of mind:

1. A request from Prof. Arthur J. Todd of Northwestern University to contribute an article on philanthropy from the Jewish point of view to a symposium which is to be issued by the Wieboldt Foundation of Chicago.



2. A talk I gave at a luncheon of the SAJ women without scolding them but rather suggesting to them how they might accomplish something in line with the aims of the SAJ.
3. A successful talk on "Strange Interlude" which helped to bring more than the usual number of members to the annual meeting of the SAJ. As a rule these annual meetings were to me heartbreak affairs. This time, however, I seemed to feel that the SAJ idea is beginning to take root.
4. Having managed to work out the article for the Review on Malachi Twice I had to resort to articles by other contributors because I had been unable to find a unifying principle that I could apply to the material in Malachi.
5. The attitude toward me of respect and good will on the part of the members of the SAJ as shown by their eagerness to acquire Tepper's etching of me.
6. The insertion of my picture in the large canvass done by Leopold Pilichowski of the dedication of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. I sat today for him at the Jewish Center in Brooklyn where the canvass is on exhibition.

* * * *

Saturday, May 12, 1928

Had for supper last night Shoshanah (Shosh) Garber and her husband Krivonos, the young couple whose wedding ceremony took place at my house a few months ago. She is a product of the Friedland Schools in Cleveland. At present she works for Ivriah, the Women's division of the Jewish Education Association. Her function is to organize meetings in the different homes for the purpose of interesting the women in the Jewish upbringing of their children.

In the course of the conversation her husband made the remark "If you will "bensch licht" on Friday nights, I'll begin learning Hebrew."

This morning I preached on Folk Religion vs. Personal Religion. I am at work at the present time on a paper on this subject. I got no further with it than the definition of the terms. But in my talk I managed to fill out the time - about forty minutes - with causerie about the need of being interested in the subject. There were only 85 people present.

That with all these handicaps I managed to acquit myself creditably shows how potent is the drive of habit. But the reaction on my spirit is none too exhilarating. When I consider that after so many years of preaching sermons I have no reason to be ashamed of there should be such a poor response in terms of numbers or of activity, I feel completely frustrated.

This afternoon Isaac Allen (who had been present at the services this morning) called. He brought with him a certain Prof. Lazarson who came recently from Riga where he teaches constitutional law. Lazarson came in this country in the interests of a Tarbut High School which is in need of a building for its classes, costing about \$50,000. The Latvian Jews in this country are contributing about \$10,000.

He told me that the Yidishist High School is provided with a building. When I asked him whether they teach Hebrew in the Yidishist school he replied that they teach it in the same way as Latin or Greek is usually taught. Besides, they take advantage of the instruction in Hebrew to ridicule the religion.

* * *

Saturday, May 19, 1928

I have been working rather steadily this week. The two main interruptions were 1) a visit on Tuesday night from Dr. Israel Wachsler and 2) Dr. Weizmann's request that I come to see him at his rooms at the Commodore today at 12.

Wechsler came with a plan to issue a call to fifteen or twenty people consisting in part of members of the ZO administration, in part of the members of the opposition, and some neutrals. I poured cold water on his plan. I must confess that I was rather bored by his planless suggestion, and began to suspect his motives in wasting so much time on what seems to me aimless pottering. He named with approval Dr. Rongy, Dr. Coralnik and one or two others, about all of whom I have received very unfavorable opinions from others. But Dr. Weizmann told me, when I asked him about Wechsler, that he means well.

2. Dr. Weizmann wanted ~~me~~ to see me together with Semel and Unterberg about our attending the Zionist Convention at Pittsburgh. Unterberg expected to see W. this evening, so he did not come at noon. We showed signs of being very much upset by the controversy. He never hides his feelings. On the contrary he plays them up to a degree that I would never expect in a leader. But we Jews like him all the more for that.

Semel as usual answered with a story and promised to get others to go. I promised to attend the convention.

Thursday, May 24, 1928, 6:00 P.M.

I was to Chicago last Monday to attend the second meeting of the Midwest Council of the SAJ. There were only about fifteen present. I felt, nevertheless, that the effort was not wasted. Felix Levy and I read papers. My paper dealt with the distinction between personal and folk religion.

I was surprised to see Rabbi Stoltz and Mann attend the convention.

Rabbi Teller informed me in the course of a conversation that Prof. Haydon with whom he was taking a course in comparative religion

spent some time explaining to his class my conception of Judaism, referring to it approvingly as the humanistic approach. He couldn't have characterized it more truly.

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Wednesday, May 30, 1928

Last Thursday night, Shabuot night, we had Maariv services as usual late in the evening - at 8:15. After services I gave a talk on Ludwig Lewisohn's "Island Within." There was a very good attendance and the people went away satisfied. Much as I have been opposed to discussing plays and novels from the pulpit, I must admit that it is the most effective way of getting the people to come. Though one may speak with the tongues of angels, if the people aren't there to hear of what good is it? It is true that once we take as a text anything that is not a part of Jewish literature we are not contributing to the intensification of the Jewish consciousness, for in developing a group consciousness it is the text that counts; yet what is to be done if the people are so traditionless as to be repelled by a text drawn from tradition? May we hope that in a generation from now there will be some Jews who will have acquired sufficient of a Jewish tradition to be capable of listening with genuine interest to a real Jewish address or sermon?

Although I had not intended to speak on Friday morning there was too much of an audience to be dismissed without a Shabuoth talk I read and interpreted the selection from "Kether Malkoth" and delivered a sermon on the interpretation our ancestors gave to the historical event of the covenant with the national Deity at Sinai; pointing out that the important thing is not the event but the meaning we give to the event. Saturday morning I addressed the Bar-Mizvah, Adolph Klein, and delivered a sermon on Being a Jew but Not Living

as a Jew, taking as the text the historic background to the story of Ruth. The three addresses were very successful.

Saturday night I attended the Bar Mizvah party of the Kleins. Sunday at 2:00 I officiated at the funeral of Dr. Schulz, a member of the SAJ. After the funeral I attended the engagement party of the Blauners at Chalifs. Then I taught for an hour and a half at the Institute, and at night I attended the engagement party of the Friedman-A. Lamport at the Ritz. Tuesday night I officiated at the wedding of Mildred Garfunkel. Monday night the SAJ Board of Trustees met. The greater part of the time was devoted to an explanation of the tripartite method of organization which I am urging at the present time. The majority of the Board were present. It was by no means an easy matter to convince them of the merits of the plan which involves getting the present SAJ group to know itself henceforth merely as an SAJ congregation, and in addition to undertake the organization of an SAJ chapter.

This afternoon a P.R. Drucker called. He teaches accounting in Colorado University, where he is designated Doctor, Professor and Dean. I know him from my boyhood days. He attended the Seminary at the same time I did, though he is a few years older than I am. He always had something of the adventurer in him, but not having had the opportunity to carry out his wish, he would often give free reign to his imagination. He did not seem capable of fitting himself into the routine of Jewish work, and for a number of years he disappeared from my circle of colleagues and friends. It was only a few years ago that I heard from his sister who was married to the late Dr. Kotkor that he was teaching somewhere in Colorado, and that he had cut himself off from Jewish life completely. He had even asked at the Seminary office that no mail be delivered to him from the Seminary. His motive was the desire to hide his Jewish identity.

Recently I had heard that he was on Sabbatical leave without pay and on Shabuoth (Saturday) he turned up at the SAJ services. When I greeted him the first thing he said was that he wanted to see me because he had a radical and revolutionary plan which he wanted to get my opinion on. He came today punctually at the time I designated. Before long he corroborated the truth of the rumor about his having severed his connections with Jewish life. Although he did not become formally affiliated with the Unitarian church in Colorado Springs, he gave his services there. He now feels that this complete severance from Jewish life is a mistake which he wants to make good.

The plan which he had in mind to speak to me about and which he now found to be infeasible was that of organizing a group of seekers of the truth in religion. In that group he wanted to have Christians, Mohammedans, Buddhists and Jews. In order that the best of each religion be discovered the members of the group would have to attend the worship of every denomination and to participate in the services to the fullest extent. Drucker's idea was that when attending Jewish services all should wear tallith and tephilin. When he was asked whether he would partake of Catholic communion he hesitated for a moment but finally stated that he would. The other members of the group balked at the idea of wearing tallith and tephilin. This convinced him, he said, that the members of each denomination loved the denomination more than the truth. The old Drucker all over again. His father was an old fashioned Rav whose ethical standards were not of the highest, and he himself was always on the hunt for excitement and adventure. He once raised a row in the Rutgers Street church on the East Side where a "Meshumed" was delivering a sermon to Jews to become Christians. When the Spanish War broke out he enlisted and got as far as Chatanooga where he was laid up with typhoid on account of the hardtack and poisoned meat they then gave the soldiers.

He has a son seventeen studying forestry at the Colorado University. Being invited to join a fraternity where they admit only Christians he asked his father whether he should say that he was a Christian. "If I am not mistaken, we are Jews," the father quoted his son as saying. This is what becomes of Jewish life.

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He wanted to know what he should/to become affiliated once again with Jewish life, yet he did not care to associate himself with the congregation in Colorado Springs, because of the poor calibre of the people that belong to it. I invited him to join the SAJ Chapter.

This afternoon Dr. Benderly spent three hours at my house. The first matter I discussed with him was the possibility of Judith doing work at the Bureau instead of either going to Chicago or establishing a private studio. It must be remembered that I too am vacillating and temperamental in the matter of deciding whether or not I am to treat Jewish life as having a future in this country. Within the last few weeks I have swung over to the affirmative attitude. That being the case I have begun to think once again that it was to Judith's best interests to do Jewish work. Lewison's book may have something to do with this more determined stand in favor of Jewish work. In addition it may have been the disappointment at Judith's failure to get the position at the Lincoln school for which she had been highly recommended by Miss Bivins of Teachers College. The opportunity that Dr. Benderly holds out to Judith, that of preparing song material for the Jewish Home Institute, should stimulate Judith to creative effort of a high order.

The rest of the time I enjoyed listening to what he had to say about his experiences at Wise's Institute of Religion, with Semel. Unterberg and Leblang, and his plans of cultivating a select number

of young men as material for the seminaries and training school for social workers. It would take me too long to record even the substance of what he said. I shall merely make mention of the most significant of his remarks.

Of Wise's JIR he said: The great advantage of the JIR is the freedom allowed to the members of the faculty to express their views. The drawback however was the poor quality of the student material. The fact that the students were Americans was an advantage, but this was upset by their ignorance of things Jewish. I showed him the examination papers in Midrash of some of the men in the Seminary. Students who have come to us from the Yeshiva translated

"The son of a bird-raiser died." This by Harry Halpern who has been functioning successfully as a Rabbi in Brooklyn for the last five or six years. Fedder translated "he rose to warm the nostrils of the dead." Dr. Ginzberg mentioned at the last faculty meeting that in one of the prize essays a student spelt Achan's name .

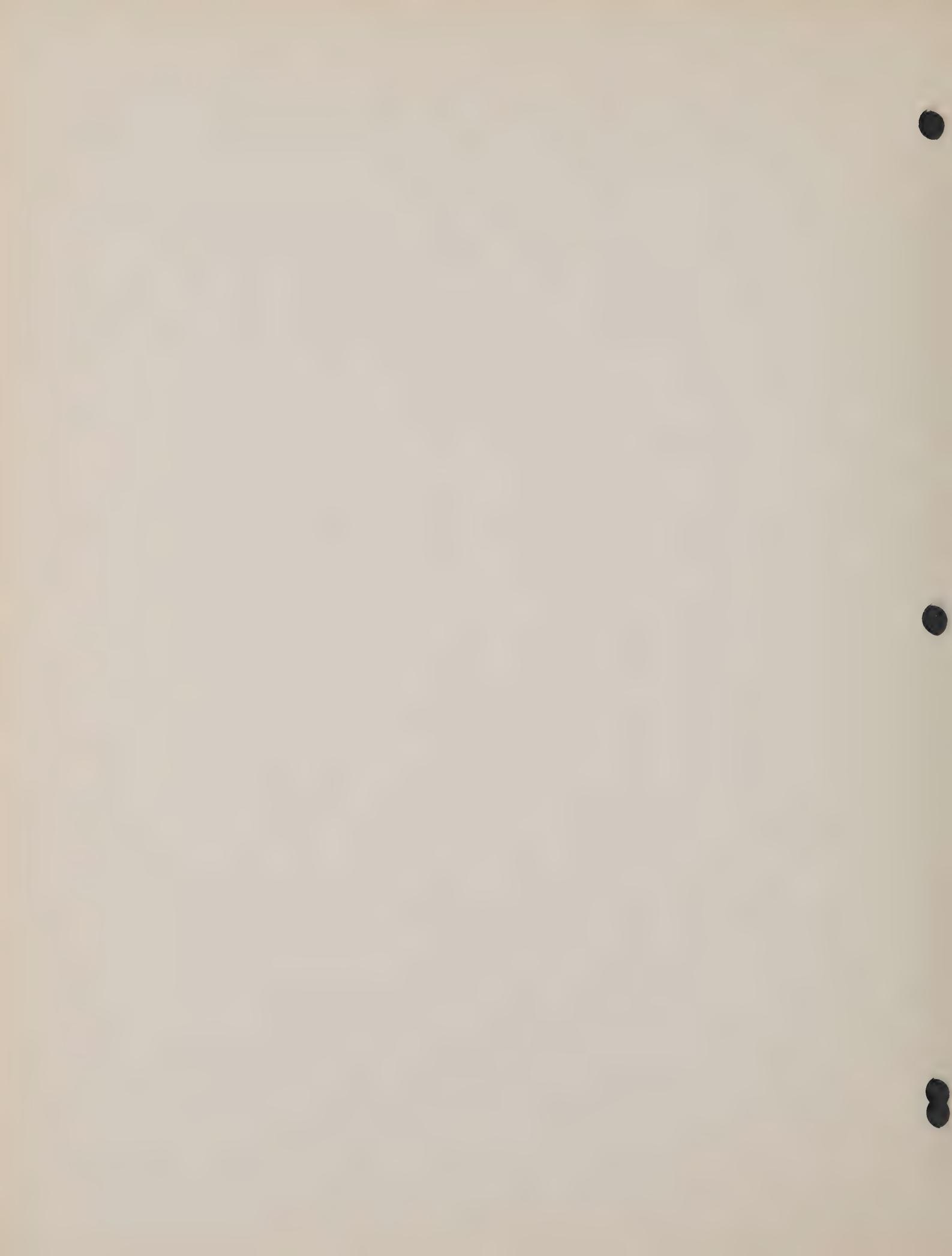
Benderly quoted an interesting remark illustrating the difference between the American and Maskil type of mind. An American believed that the shortest distance between two points was a straight line, whereas a Maskil was sure that it was a circle.

He made a very significant remark with regard to the Eastern European Jew. He said that the Eastern European Jew has so far proved a failure spiritually. He accounts for this failure by pointing out that the Eastern European Jew has been immersed in the struggle to gain a foothold in life, and that he had had to struggle so hard to win a place for himself that he has become callous to the finer things of life and even to suffering.

He characterized Semel as a publicity seeker. He mentioned having told Semel that in all the six years that they have been

working and spent about \$800,000 they have not succeeded in getting even a small group of Jews genuinely interested in the problem of Jewish education. They may have gotten a type like Janah Goldstein who is connecting himself with as many Jewish causes as possible, and endeavoring to get his name on as many stationery sheets as he can, so that he shall stand a chance of getting a judgeship. Or they may have the services of a man like Leblang, who when he approached a friend of his for a donation said to him "If you were to give your child a Catholic education, I would not care, so long as it is religious. But so far not a single person of intelligence and true Jewish sympathies is to be found in the JEA.

An outstanding example which verifies Benderly's generalization about Eastern European Jews is S. C. Lamport. Sol Lamport has been negotiating with the Hebrew University of Jerusalem to accept from him a plot of ground in the vicinity of the University to be used as botanical garden. He wants to present this gift in memory of his late son, Montague, who was drowned last summer. The University, however, could not see its way to accepting the gift unless at least an additional \$25,000 could be secured to defray the expenses to be incurred in converting that plot into a botanical garden. Sol Lamport knew very well that it was useless to ask his nephew S.C. to advance that amount of money. When Magnes was here some months ago he tried to tackle S.C. for the money, but S.C. always managed to evade him. He is a very eel for that. Accordingly Sol came to ask my ~~adix~~ advice. He thought perhaps I might move S.C. I knew my customer, however, and I wouldn't even try. Sol hit upon a plan. He went to see Weizmann and asked Weizmann to write to Warburg to ask S.C. for the money. He also asked Benderly to write to Lowenstein who in turn was to write to Warburg to ask S.C. for the money. The letter from Warburg arrived duly and acted like a charm. S.C. contributed the amount without protest.



In former days it was the jovian nod of Jacob H. Schiff that got our Eastern European Jews to take an interest in philanthropic matters. For the privilege of sitting on the Board of the Montefiore Home of which Schiff was president a Russian Jew was ready to seal his shirt.

I cannot understand how it is possible for a man to have the patience which Benderly displays. After having invested so much effort in the Jewish Home Institute he has succeeded in securing only 100 subscribers to the course. Of the 30,000 Hadassah women that were written to 1400 replied they would like to get the pamphlet outlining the course. Of these 1400 only 20 actually became subscribers.

There is a tragic note in his conversation whenever he speaks of his plans. He refers to them as his illusions which are essential to his life. Otherwise he restrains his even temper and his masterful disposition, though he never allows himself a day of rest or recreation. Both he and his wife are continually in harness pulling the heavy load of their activities with seemingly untiring spirit.

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Thursday, May 31, 1928, 1:10 A.M.

Just returned from a protracted meeting at the home of Dr. Louis I. Harris, Health Commissioner of N.Y. who, together with Israel Matz, at the suggestion of Dr. Wechsler, called together a number of Zionists for the purpose of bringing about peace in the Zionist movement in America and effecting if possible the necessary changes in the organization. There were about 18 to 20 people present. Besides those named I recall Messrs. Simon (formerly of Holland), Israel Levinthal, Sprayregen, Siegel, Kramer, Germane, Jacob Goel, etc.

It is certainly heartening to see a man like Dr. Harris who holds so high and important a position in the city take such a vital interest in Zionism. I was going to complain of the interruption which this is going to cause in my work, but when I see a man like Harris sacrificing so much time, or a man like Wechsler, I must make up my mind that it is my duty to serve the cause even at the sacrifice of my fondest ambition.

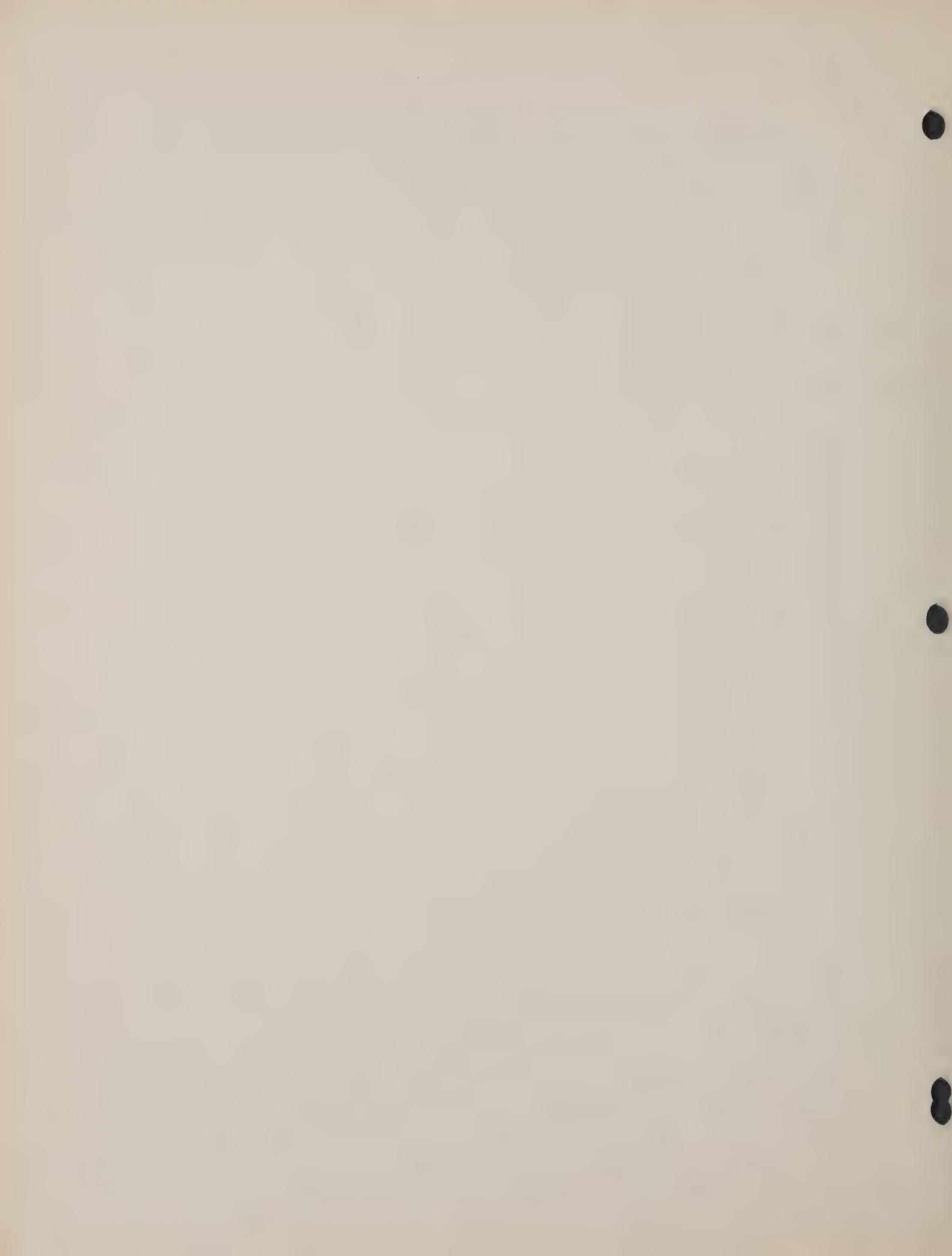
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Monday, June 4, 1928

This is the month of meetings, luncheons and dinners. And now with the additional burden of having to take part in the negotiations to bring peace between the Zionist administration and its opponents, I am unable to do much reading or writing.

Friday I attended a meeting of the Seminary faculty, which included a luncheon. The entire affair lasted till 3:30. The only incident worth recording was the one that arose out of a discussion whether a student by the name of Tobias Lieberman should be advised to leave. He is supposed to have considerable knowledge of the Talmud, but otherwise he is a half-wit. Hyamson began to argue against discharging him. He maintained that Lieberman might become a scholar and a good man at research. When Ginzberg heard this he flared up and shouted "I object strongly against the implication that any one who is a fool or incompetent is qualified to do research work."

The baccalaureate sermon was delivered by Jacob Grossman. I attended the services at the Seminary mainly for the purpose of seeing what Grossman did with a number of ideas I suggested ~~in~~ to him for the address that he was to give to the graduates. When I heard his sermon I felt deeply humiliated at the thought that a simpleton like Grossman -- for that was what the sermon proved him



to be -- should be called Rabbi and be entrusted with the work of spiritual leadership.

The quality of the graduation exercises yesterday did not rise much above that of Grossman's address.

Yesterday I attended two conferences of the "Committee on Peace and Reconstruction" one with the Administrative Com. of the ZOA and the other with the Exec. Com. of the Hadassah. As far as I can gather, both sides are wrong. Lipsky is not the type of man the Zionist movement needs at the present time and he is wrong in wanting to maintain his post at all costs. The Hadassah is wrong in putting upon Lipsky the entire blame for the failure of the Zionist movement to enlist the cooperation of important and influential laymen. Would to God I could have kept out of these negotiations. It is mainly my promise to Weizman that I will attend the Pittsburgh convention, which led me to be drawn into these negotiations. After all, if I am to attend the convention I must have some idea what this controversy is all about.

Last night I attended a dinner of the Alumni of the Teachers Institute.

This afternoon I had the teachers of the SAJ Hebrew School give me a report of the work done by them this year. When I learned of the indifference of the parents, of the attitude of the children as expressed in their slogan, "What difference does it make?" and of the discouragement of the teachers I became very much depressed. The question which the teachers wanted me to answer was: Where is it all leading to? I replied that in my opinion surviving as a Jew requires a certain combination of traits as a prerequisite. Those traits are in the main a certain natural conservatism plus an inherent regard for the continuity of a cultural tradition as sanctioning the reality of spiritual values. One who has these traits



is likely to remain a Jew. But such a combination exists in a very small number of those who are known as Jews. Hence we cannot expect that very many of the present generation of Jews will contribute to the maintenance of Jewish life.

I read this evening the advance copy of the article by Irwin Edman ~~on~~ the synagogue which is to appear in the July issue of the Menorah. What he says there about Wise and Krass is absolutely true. It is about time that some one deflated that windbag Krass. The Menorah will not increase its resources or its circulation through this article, but it is serving the cause of truth. Long may it live and prosper.

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Tuesday, June 5, 1928

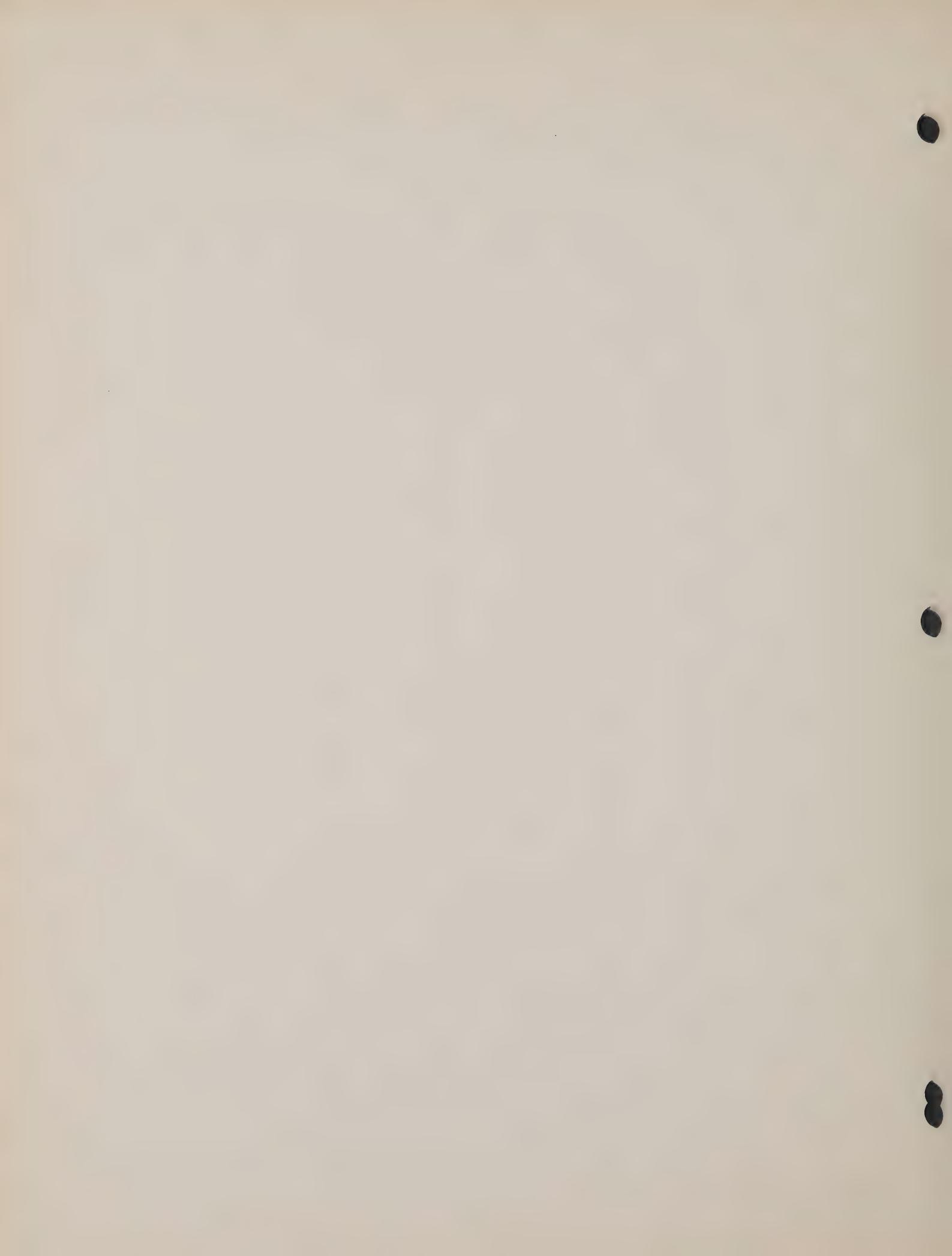
In my remarks to the Alumni of the Teachers Institute last Sunday night I gave credit to Dr. Benderly for being the source and fountainhead of whatever constructive work was being done in Jewish education at the present time. Unfortunately he has not found his "good uncle" in the Jewish community to back his plans with money. Jewish life is getting to be a matter of finding enough "good uncles" to support the various institutions. Dr. Rosen who was obsessed with the colonization scheme in Russia happened to have a good friend and admirer in Rosenwald. Hence the millions that Rosenwald is pouring into Russia for that purpose. Magnes is a favorite with Warburg, that is how he first got from him support for the Bureau of Jewish Education and in recent years for the Hebrew University. Unterberg happens to think well of me; this is how the Teachers Institute has come to have a building. There is no such thing as a Jewish public opinion that could be depended ~~on~~ to elicit support from men of means. This will never come about until we shall have a Jewish community life.

And there are so many occasions that could be utilized to create Jewish sentiment and interest. If I had anything to do with the graduation exercises of the Seminary I would make them the occasion for a great public demonstration. I would get the largest possible auditorium, organize a pageant which would picturize past achievements and present day needs, hold a great impressive service with a student choir and instrumental music, and have addresses that would cause every Jewish heart to beat faster with self-respect and aspiration. Seminary day ought to become a red letter day in American Jewish life.

How I should love to present these suggestions to a person who would be interested and had the power to carry them into effect. If Adler would display the least bit of desire to get me to talk to him as man to man, I would be as devoted to him as I am to Benderly for he is not a bad sort of man. The main trouble with him is that he has no mind whatever for the fundamental problems of religion and human life. His virtues are love of peace and a contempt for all sorts of bombast. With these he could accomplish a great deal if he were not taken up with a thousand and one affairs.

The Seminary boasts of its insistence upon its graduates having a considerable amount of Jewish knowledge. Here are tid bits of scholarship displayed by its students in the senior department:

Halpern (who studied in the Yeshivah has been a successful rabbi for the last five or six years and will graduate next year from the Seminary) translated "The son of a bird raiser died." Rudinsky also a Yeshivah man and in his third year at the Seminary translated it, "The son of an individual who raised birds." ("Rabbis" Jacob Grossman and Signer had never heard of the p. 15).



was translated by Fedder (who has been officiating as rabbi for some time) "He rose to warn the nostrils of the dead." Glatt translated "His father in law was sitting and laughing." Barnet translated "flee to their hiding place."

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Wednesday morning, June 6, 1928, 2 A.M.

Spent three hours this evening at Dr. I. S. Wechsler's office with the other members of the "peace and reconstruction" committee. During the meeting I called up Lipsky and asked that, since on account of a telegram sent out over his signature (to the effect that members who had not paid their dues would be credited as members and other irregularities in the elections) charges were being made against the legitimacy of the delegates, he should consent to having the various opposition groups represented in the election and credentials committees. He refused to make any concessions at first, but in the end yielded and said that he would accept any suggestions that the committee had to make on that point. The explanation that he gave of the telegram sounded very fishy.

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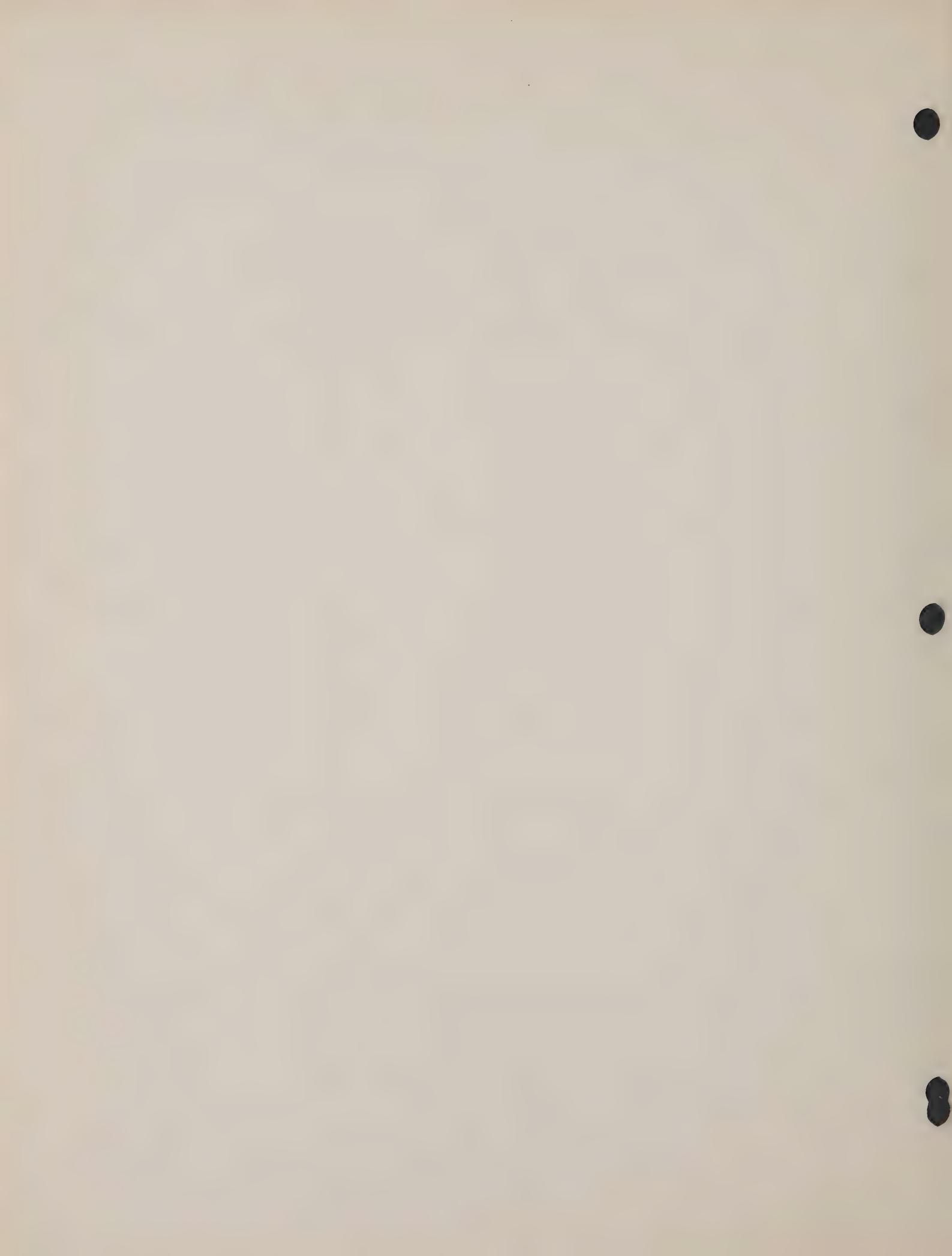
Tuesday, June 12, 1928

A general meeting of the original group took place last Thursday night at 210 W. 70 St. On Sunday morning the sub committee entrusted with powers to negotiate and publish resolutions met at the home of Dr. Harris. Dr. Wechsler was disgruntled and insisted upon resigning. I can't make him out. What is he after? Dr. Poole who has been included in this committee advised our ignoring the illegitimate methods pursued by Lipsky et al to pack the convention. On Friday Lipsky had called me up to ask me that I prevent the committee

from trying to play politics. What the outcome will be is at the present time very uncertain. It looks as though nothing will come of the effort.

Personally I feel as totally demoralized and as much agitated by a civil war in which one part of myself is engaged against the other, as the Zionist movement. Intellectually I know I am all wrong for being so unhappy; I am fully aware that it is nothing but selfishness and greed for abilities which have been denied me by heredity and upbringing and yet I cannot get hold of myself to overcome this gnawing discontentment. What a wonderful subject for study and analysis I would make for one who has descriptive ability. The special occasion for my present moroseness is the fact that I had promised myself to be ready for my 47th birthday on June 11 with the translation of the "Mesilat" and the introduction and I am as far from being through with it as ever. The whole business doesn't amount to very much, and yet it has been on my hands for the last dozen years. When I see how men write one book after another and how I am struggling with a measly piece of work like this, I naturally have good reason to be disheartened. Then again I realize how foolish it is of me to be forever champing at the bit that holds me back from getting anywhere. I should really like to think and feel ethically and philosophically. I should like to be able to resign myself to my limitations. But there comes along the psychologist and tells me that such acceptance of one's limitations is nothing but a trick of the imagination. He labels it the compensatory tendency implying that I would be a fool for resorting to it.

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Wednesday, June 13, 1928

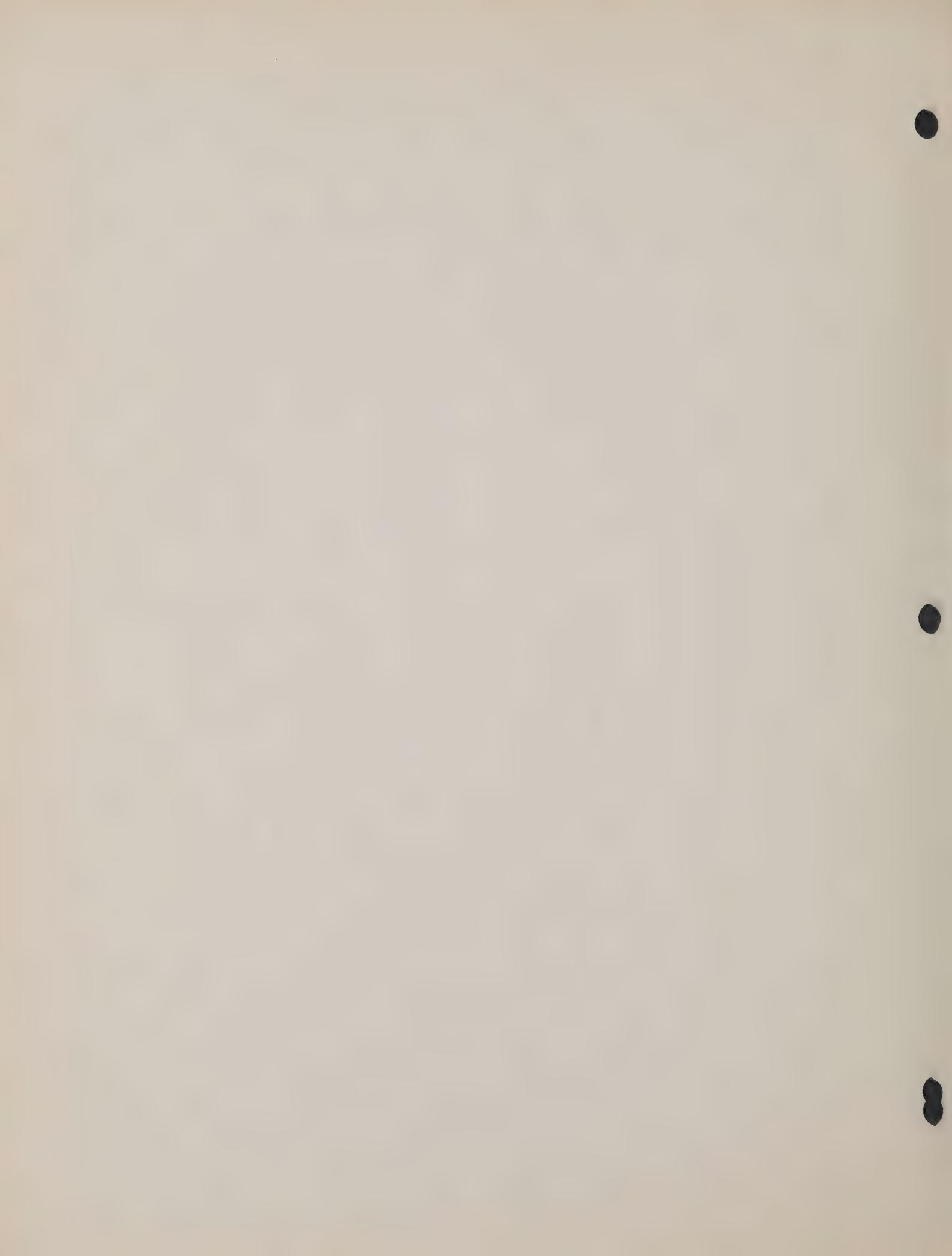
Another meeting of the sub-committee on peace and reconciliation took place last night. Present were the Matz's, father and son, Simon, Neumann, Wechsler, Siegel and I. Some progress was made in formulating a plan of reorganization of the administrative committee.

This afternoon I had luncheon at the Windermere Hotel (92 St. and West End Ave.) with the students of the Training School for Jewish Social Work. After luncheon we went up to the lounging room on the top floor and discussed the problem of Judaism. The discussion dragged somewhat. These young people -- and for that matter even the Seminary students when they are frank enough to express their minds -- are forever placing Judaism on the defensive. They are possessed by the fear lest they rationalize their interest in Jewish life an interest which they confess is based on the economic advantage they expect to derive from doing Jewish work. Under these circumstances no matter what I might say in defense of Judaism, however plausible, they are bound to put down as the result of a desire to rationalize. I wish I could formulate some concept whereby I could combat this exaggerated attribution of thought to mere "rationalization". Anyhow, matters are in a pretty bad state, when young people who are training for Jewish work, rabbis, teachers and social workers, are so wormeated by doubt as the value and future of the work which is to become their calling.

This evening I attended one of the most disconcerting meetings I have ever taken part in. Not long ago H. Liebovitz apprised the SAJ Board of Trustees of the fact that Endel, the president of the Bnai ~~Brith~~ Jeshurun was ready to consider the proposition made by me a year ago to merge the Hebrew school of the Bnai Jeshurun Cong. ~~XXXXXX~~ on 88 St. with the SAJ Hebrew school. The Bnai

Jeshurun Cong. recently put up a community house that outdoes in magnificence and wealth of facilities any of the community centers in this part of the city. The logical thing to do, the Jewish thing to do, is to organize there a ~~fine~~ Hebrew school that would serve as a stimulus to the development of the proper system of Jewish education that is feasible in this country. With that object in mind I would be only too happy to sacrifice whatever loyalty for the SAJ and a J. school might inculcate in the children. Were the Bnai Jeshurun to consent to the plan to amalgamate the Hebrew Schools, it would entail new worries and responsibilities as far as I am concerned but I feel too much driven by this inner urge to advance the cause of Judaism to stop to consider the added burdens and sources of unhappiness that the amalgamation would bring to me. I confess that it is in no spirit of voluntary self-sacrifice that I embroil myself in all these complications. It is some impersonal energy, some logical necessity endowed with dynamic quality, that hurtle me along very much to my personal discomfort.

How much better off would I have been if I had been spared the sense of mortification I experienced at the meeting which took place this evening in the new community house of the Bnai Jeshurun. First the very idea of my having to come to Rabbi ^{Israel} Goldstein and Endel hurt me. After all, if he had any ^{right} he would have said Kaplan was my teacher for four years. It is my place to come to see him. If that was too much, then we should have met at the house of one or the other of the members of either organization. Yet, I did not until this very minute allow myself to dwell upon this blow to my pride. If Goldstein had no ^{right} how can I expect that Liebowitz or Cohen who with me represented the SAJ at this meeting would have sense enough to insist upon the proper deference being shown me. I know all this is silly. But I am human too and I want to be as



honest with myself as I can. If for nothing else I wish to record that although I did feel hurt, I managed to ignore the slight.

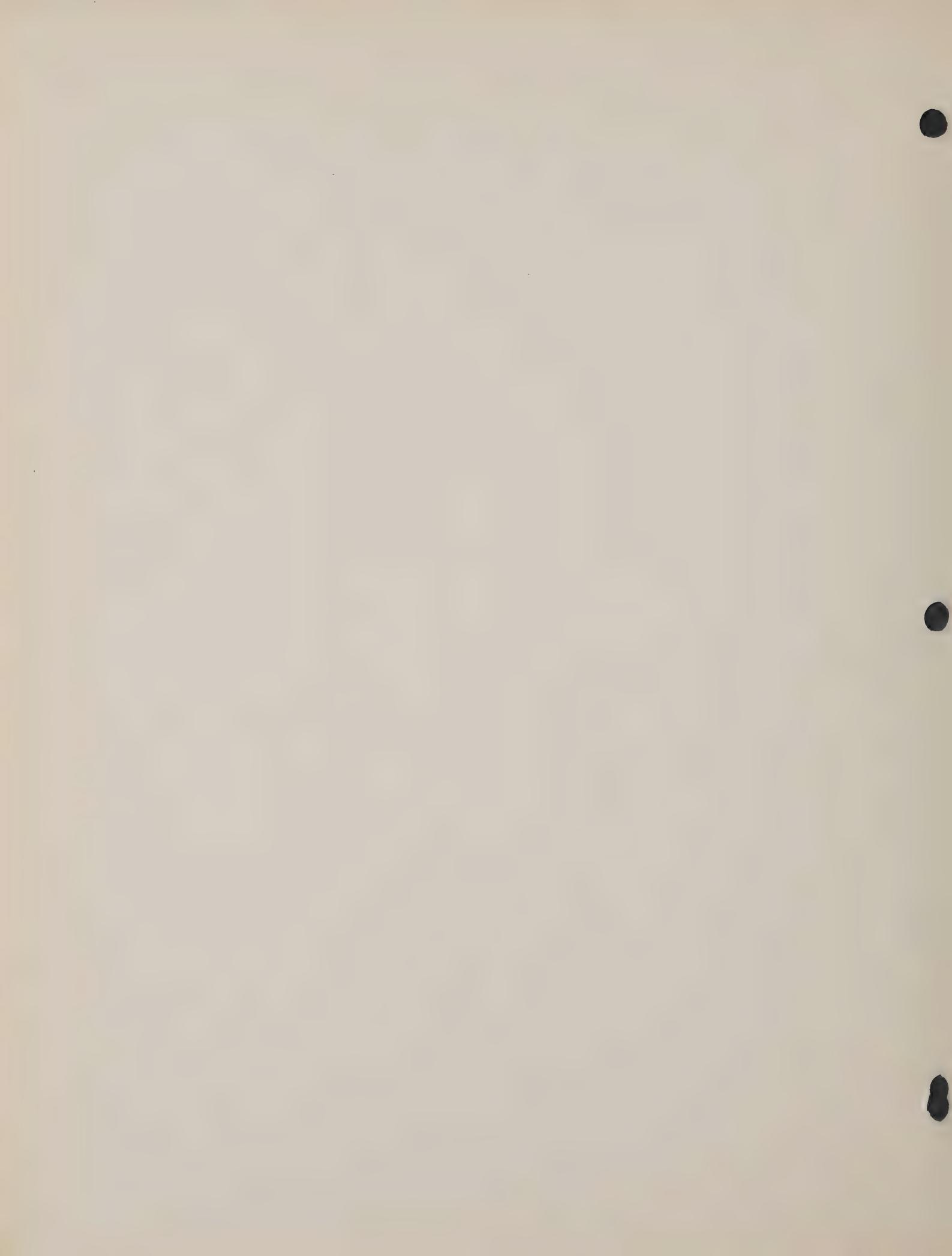
The Bnai Jeshurun was represented by a committee of about ten; the SAJ by a committee of four. Not long after the meeting was opened I made it clear to them that I had in mind the organization of a Hebrew school with sessions three times a week, as distinct from the Sunday School. I gathered that they had a week day school with less than fifty pupils. Of these fifty, twenty belong to the confirmation class. No tuition fees are paid by the children of the week-day school. There developed no opposition to the suggestion that a Hebrew School be established which should aim to have between 250 and 300 children, until Goldstein came. He was decidedly hostile to the plan. His contention was that it was necessary to guard the institutional loyalty, the loyalty to the congregation. A school such as the one proposed would undermine that loyalty. I had to do all I could to control myself at hearing a so-called rabbi and leader making loyalty to his congregation a reason for opposing the organization of a high class Hebrew school. What phases me is not only that a "rabbi" should be so brazenly unashamed to place his personal ambition above the interests of Judaism, but that a body of men and women should look upon such a betrayer of the larger interests of our people as a moral and spiritual guide. He even had the impudence to assert that classes of four and five were more effective than classes between fifteen and twenty. Although all the lay members of the Bnai Jeshurun favored the plan, Liebovitz was right in saying that with Goldstein taking that attitude, it was folly to try to push it. If I were tortured on the rack I couldn't feel more spiritually tortured than I was by this meeting of tonight.

Last night the Israel Friedlaender classes held their annual . I arrived there at 10:30, but I could see that there was lacking the animation usual on these occasions in previous years. Although I had not intended to speak, Chipkin's presentation of the Friedlaender picture done by Pilichowski made it necessary for me to say something. For a genuinely extemporaneous talk it was not at all bad. But that does not change one whit my fears that the Friedlaender classes have suffered a slump, due perhaps to the fact that Chipkin, although he now gets more salary than he used to get before, devotes less time and interest than he did in former years. Probably more good could have been accomplished with the money if it had been used to strengthen the pedagogic phase of the training department of the Teachers Institute proper. But I haven't the strength to keep on fighting everybody's whims. This happens to be Warburg's whim.

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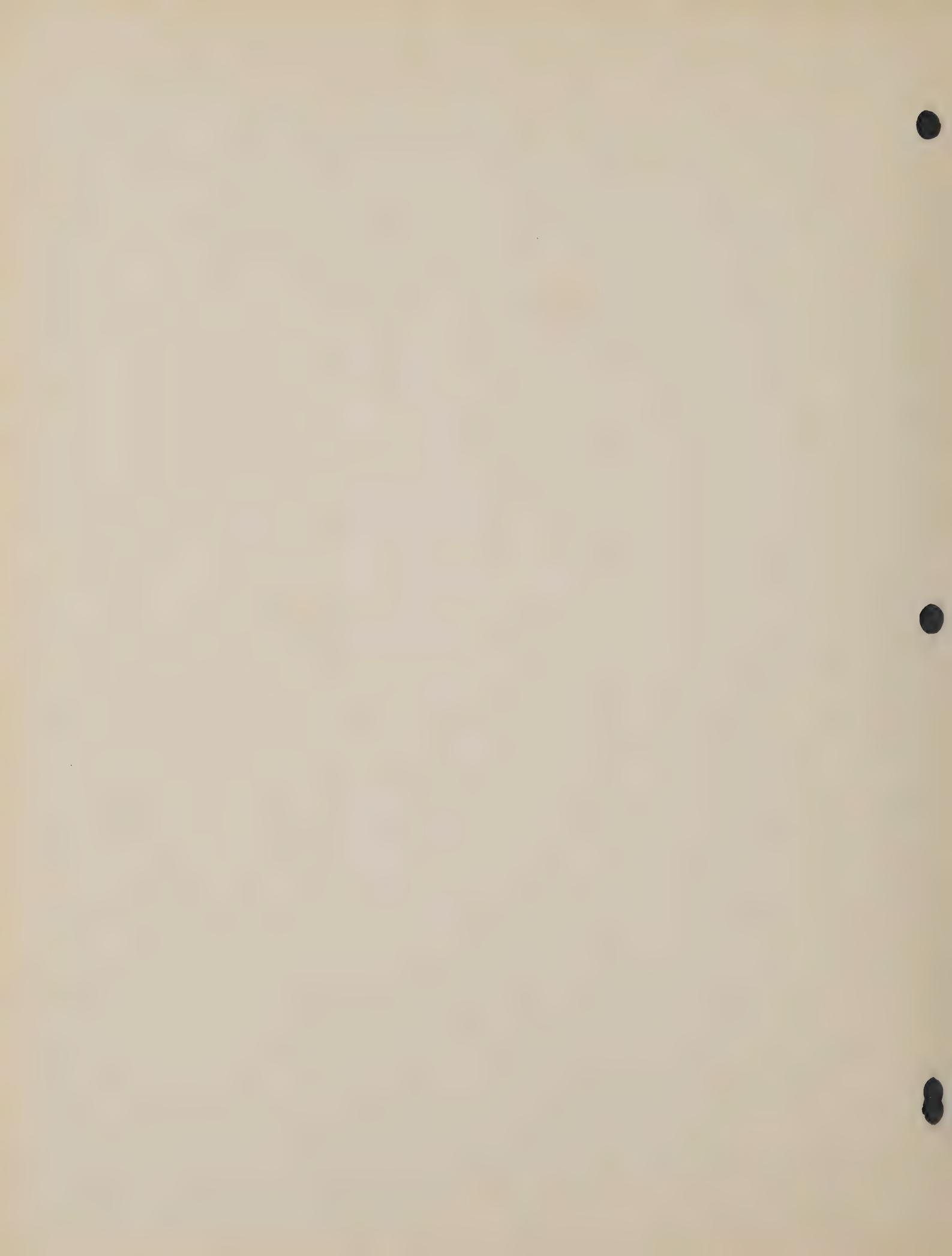
Friday, June 15, 1928

This part of the diary is getting to look like a book of minutes of a society -- meetings all the time. At the meeting of the Peace and Reconstruction committee which took place last night there were present besides the sub-committee, members of the three parties to the present controversy. I acted as chairman and insisted the meeting be conducted in orderly fashion. De Haas acted the obstructionist. In view of the actual agreement in principle that a change is necessary in method of organization, the present controversy is all the more unjustified and ridiculous, since it is made to turn purely upon the question of Lipsky's being in or out of office. A man is drowning. He has two friends on shore who see his plight. These two friends instead of trying to save him begin fighting each other, because each one claims that he is better fitted to save the drowning man. That is the situation in Zionism



These meetings have eaten into these precious days of mine which I had hoped to devote to study and writing. In about ten days I have to be ready with a paper on Judaism as a Civilization to be read at the Rabbinical Assembly. As soon as I sit down to collect my thoughts on the subject, the telephone begins to ring. In order, however, not to waste any more time, I shall plunge into the subject right here and make of it whatever I can right now.

The significance of the conception of Judaism as a civilization is that it provides us with an effective instrument for so ordering Jewish life that not only shall its continuance be assured, but also that its *raison d'etre* be fully vindicated. All thought which is not mere day dreaming is part of the process whereby a living entity, whether it be an individual or a group, strives to effect an equilibrium between itself and the environment. A concept is a thought tool or an instrument to facilitate the establishment of equilibrium between life and environment. The need in Jewish life for a new concept or thought tool to establish and maintain the equilibrium between itself and the environment is due to the inadequacy of any of the conventional concepts, the concept of religion being no more adequate than that of race. Recently even Claude Montefiore felt constrained to admit the need for a concept like Jewishness. The reason for such inadequacy becomes apparent when we analyze the nature of the present day challenge to Jewish life. The challenge itself contains factors which are not new. There is the factor of religious doubt, the questioning of tradition and the undermining of authority. There is the factor of migration with its accompanying evils. But taken as a whole it is of an unprecedented character and includes factors which are entirely new.



Being a Jew presents difficulties never experienced before, first because the social and cultural interests of the Jew are preempted and crowded out by the life of civic community of which he is a part; secondly, because even if he can spare the time, energy and resources for the cultivation of his spiritual heritage, he finds that heritage challenged by the general trend of modern ideology. Unfortunately these two causes are seldom thought of as two distinct factors to be reckoned with in our attempt to counteract the difficulty of being and living as a Jew. The tendency to escape Judaism or to find loyalty to it a burden is ascribed to some general deterioration in the stamina of the Jew, or to the spirit of the age. It is, therefore, hoped that by appealing to the courage, self-respect of the Jew we shall be able to evoke from him the self-sacrifice necessary to live as a Jew. This method of solving the problem of Judaism I believe to be ineffective and futile. The solution depends upon our realizing that the problem is essentially that of restoring the equilibrium between the collective life of the Jew and his environment. The solution will therefore depend upon the deliberate effort to modify the environment or reckon with it, even more than upon any repentant mood on the part of the Jew. Such an approach is itself novel and calls for a conception of Judaism which would warrant it. In viewing Judaism as a civilization we have such a warrant, for a civilization is necessarily determined by environmental influences. When it is on the wane we must look for the cause to some[¶]? adjustment between all those elements that constitute the civilization and the conditions that obtain in the environment.

Saturday night, June 16, 1928

It is this approach to the problem of Judaism which has given rise to the Zionist movement, and which differentiates the modern Zionist movement from the yearning in the past for a return

to Palestine and the various messianic movements to effect such a return. Zionism which is more than a political method of securing Palestine as a legally recognized homeland for the Jews, is a method of preventing Jewish life from being submerged - from succumbing to the danger to which it has become exposed the moment it gave up its corporate status and all civic prerogatives which appertained to such a status. The ideology of modern Zionism is based upon the assumption that with the best will to live a Jewish life it is almost impossible to do so to a satisfactory extent as long as the Jew lives in an environment which practically crowds out his interests in the past and the present of the Jewish people, and which deprives the Jewish group of the opportunity, if not of the right, to exercise any civic authority over its own members.

Secondly, the conception of Judaism as a civilization is intended to serve as a guide to the social and cultural reorientation of the Jew in the Diaspora. It emphasizes the fact that the survival of Judaism is impossible in the Diaspora unless some effort be made to retrieve the maximum of communal organization and authority possible in the different countries of which Jews are citizens. This conception makes evident the danger of congregationalism as the chief pattern of Jewish social organization for creative effort. It had its value as an emergency measure. Now the community, inclusive of all Jews who want to remain Jews regardless of religious views and practices must come to be regarded as the minimum unit of Jewish social life.

As a guide to cultural orientation the concept civilization emphasizes the manifoldness of Jewish life. It emphasizes the fact that the spiritual life of the Jew consists in doing whatever he can to express himself as a Jew creating - through association with a homeland, communal organization, language, literature, art, ethics

and religion. These phases of Jewish life are to be treated as inter-dependent and contingent upon each other. It compels the Jew to see Judaism steadily, organically and whole.

Thirdly, the conception of Judaism as a civilization is intended to serve as a guide to religious reorientation to those to whom neither the orthodox nor the reformist ideology is acceptable.

I have to interrupt these pacific cogitations with a record of the progress of the peace and reconstruction efforts since yesterday morning. At the meeting last Thursday night I learned that the committee of Judges has summoned the opposition and ^Hadassah to appear at a hearing tomorrow, for the purpose of learning the charges brought against the administration, and passing upon their truth. This committee of judges was appointed by the administration at the suggestion of Weitzman before he left for Europe. In view however of the efforts being made to eliminate the element of rancor and vituperation from the present controversy, the very act of sitting and hearing the charges would be an added blow to the reputation of the movement. I have therefore been keeping the wires hot to get the Judges Committee to postpone the hearing. I have been working Judge Rosalsky. He got Lipsky to come to see me today. I persuaded Lipsky that it was to the best interests of the administration to postpone the proceedings. Tonight Rosalsky arranged with me that I come before the Judges Committee tomorrow to make my plea in behalf of postponement, and he promised he would support me.

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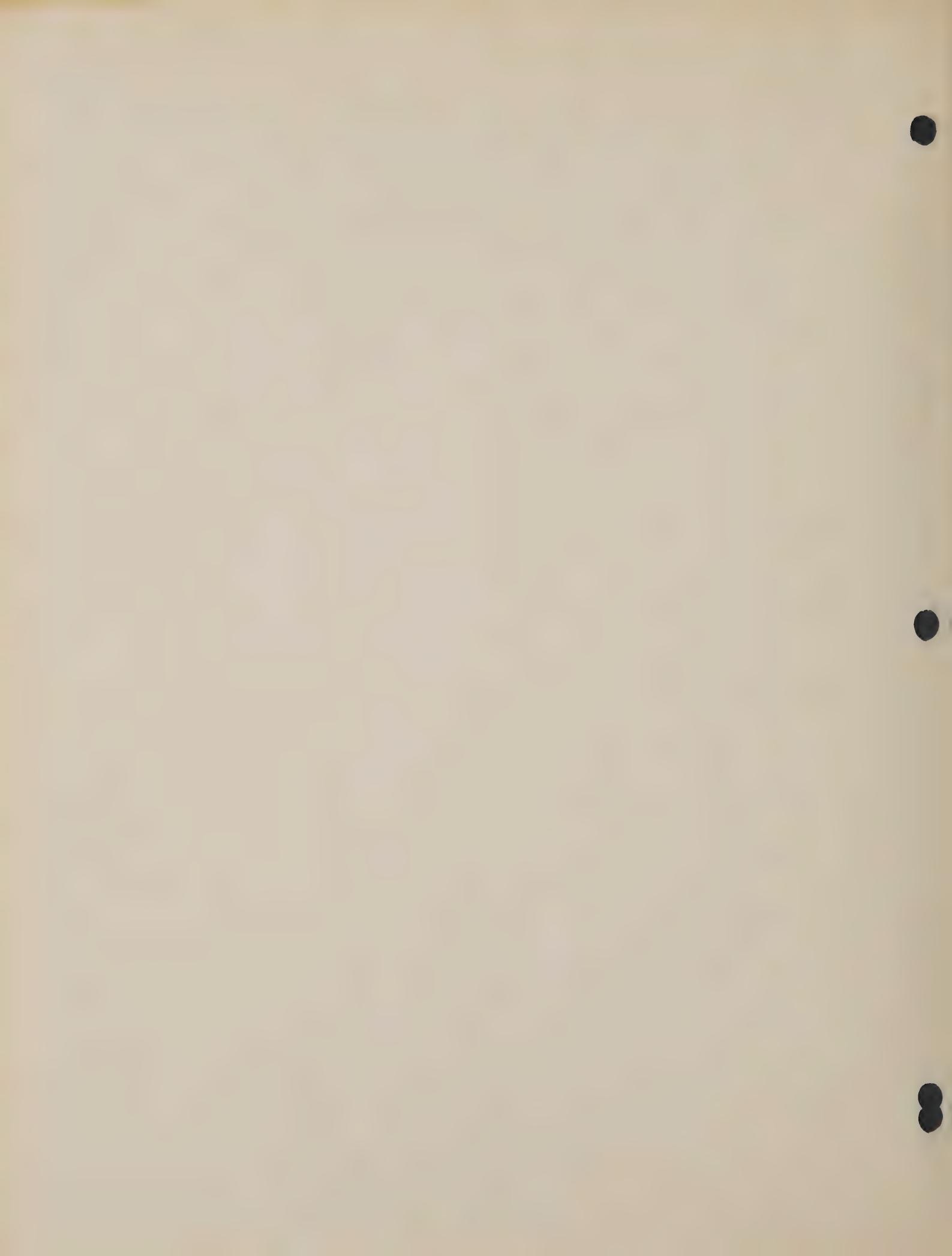
Sunday, June 17, 1928

I went this morning with Judge Rosalsky to the Unity Club in Brooklyn and met there Judges Lazansky, Moskowitz and May. I spent the greater part of the hour trying to convince them that



they should adjourn the hearing inasmuch as the main reason for their appointment was to investigate the charge of personal gain and that charge has been withdrawn by the so-called opposition party. It looked as though I would win my point. At 11 o'clock all those directly concerned in the controversy and those summoned by the judges trooped into the room in which I had been sitting with the judges. The formal session opened with Lazanski in the chair. He called on me to make a statement concerning the advisability of going on with the investigation. I made my little speech. It seemed to have impressed the judges. I felt even more certain of having carried my point when Abraham Tallin of the opposition and Rothenberg of the administration argued in favor of going on with the hearing for the remarks of the judges seemed to convey that they ought not to take up questions of maladministration due to poor judgment, or disregard of constitutional requirements, etc. The judges retired for about ten minutes to decide whether or not they should go on with the hearing. They returned with an affirmative decision. I believe, however, that my presence at the session served a useful purpose, insofar as I found the opposition to make a public statement withdrawing the charge of personal dishonesty or embezzlement of funds.

Just came across a characterization of Dante as a "Solitary Egoist" whose whole purpose was to exploit himself and ~~thrust~~ ^{to cut} his name on the walls of Time. (Yale Review, July '28, p. 818.) Yet in the same number of the Review (p. 741) you read "The intellectual adviser to be feared is the egoistic enthusiast, eager to shock the public into recognition of himself - the one with a message and the fantastic pose." Suppose Dante had given heed to the moralistic scruple advocated in the statement about the intellectual adviser,



he probably would never have become what he did. On the other hand, is (or is not) Dante's egoism permissible to us little earthworms? How is one to know whether or not the great prophets weren't anxious to shock the public into recognition of themselves. They themselves might have been totally unconscious of such a purpose, yet if they were prompted even subconsciously by the desire to attract attention to themselves, what becomes of the halos with which they have been invested?

This Zionist muddle is getting to be melodramatic. This evening a few of the peace committee - Simon, Prof. Wechsler, Emanuel Neumann, Siegel, Poole, Sidney Matz and myself -- were discussing the slate to be suggested to the convention. We assumed that Lipsky had to be given an important position, otherwise the administration forces would have everything their way. I began to be bored by the discussions, so I came home. As soon as I entered the house I learned that Judge Rosalsky had been frantically trying to get me on the phone. When I called him, he told me of a new development in the hearing this afternoon. The facts the opposition represented by Abraham Tullin brought out were sufficiently damaging. Yet the judges tried to find some loophole each time whereby Lipsky's misconduct could be interpreted only as negligence or ignorance. But after the session was over the judges went into executive session with Lipsky, Tullin and Judge Lewis. There Tullin produced evidence of Lipsky having signed his name as president of the ZOA to a note to Miss Lefkowitz enabling her to draw money from the bank by dint of the credit power which he possessed as president of the organization. On learning this the judges felt that Lipsky could not be permitted to hold any office in the organization which involved financial responsibility. Rosalsky therefore suggested to the judge's



committee to cooperate with the peace committee in reorganizing the administration and performing a thorough house cleaning. Otherwise they would be compelled to expose Lipsky's misuse of funds. Rosalsky guthorized me to report this to the group which I had left in session at the SAJ rooms and ask them to meet the judge's committee tomorrow at 5:00 P.M. at the Unity Club.

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Tuesday, June 19, 1928

The Committee of Judges held an ~~executive~~ executive session yesterday at the Unity Club at 5:00 o'clock. There was quite a gathering of people identified with the three groups in the room adjoining. The judges had with them Judge Mack and Tullin from the opposition group, Judge Lewis, Rothenberg and a lawyer who has recently been put on the Administrative Committee of the ZOA. After some time Commissioner Harris and I were called in. We were told that the Administrative Committee insisted upon the hearings being continued and Lipsky's conduct in the matter of the note being exposed. Their alleged reason was that the failure to name the act for which he was to be condemned might arouse suspicion that what he was found guilty of was in actuality much worse. Their actual reason undoubtedly was that they were sure the delegates at the convention would be ready to condone the act.

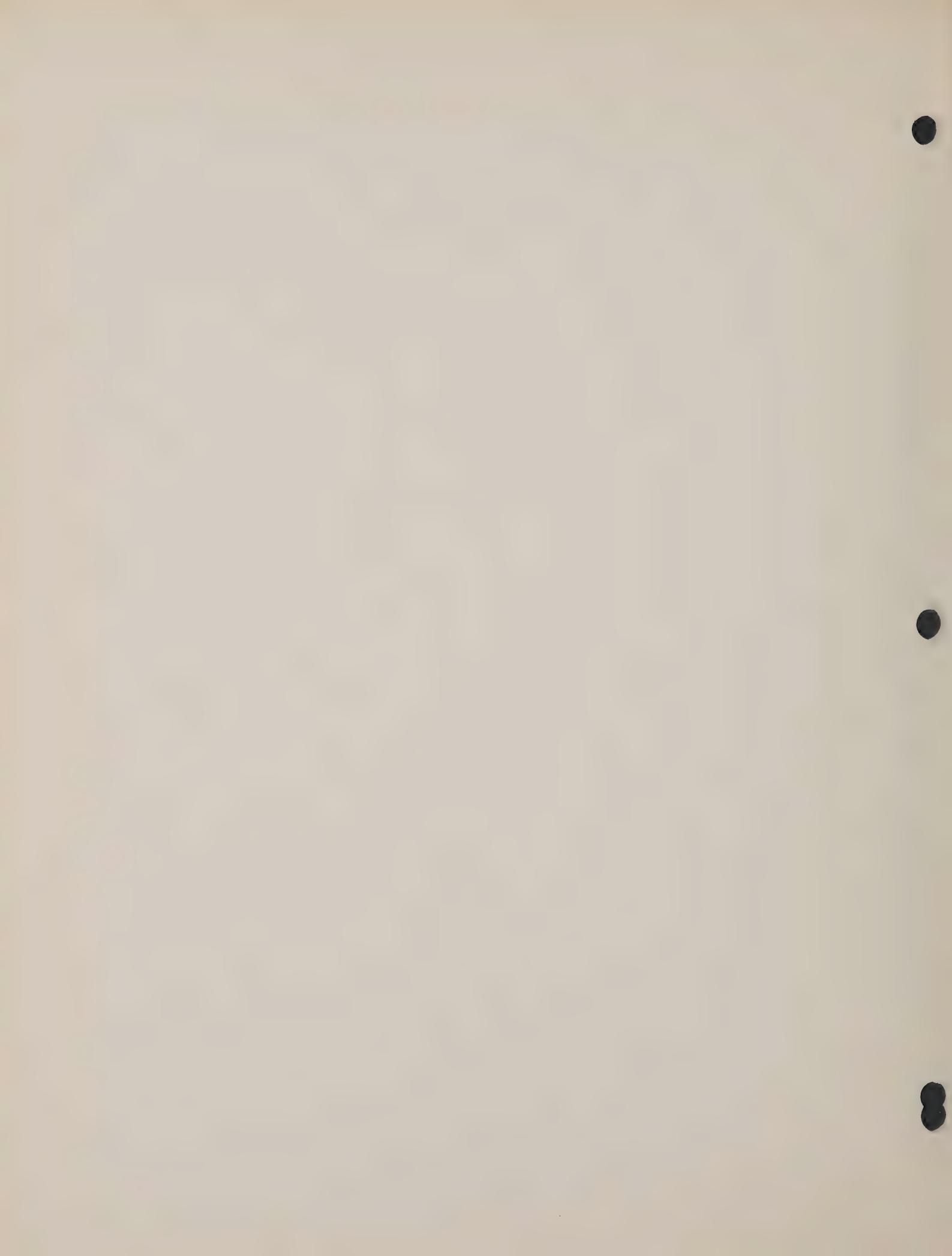
This brazen attitude of the Administration is an evidence of the low moral tone with which it has been charged by its opponent. Every one in the room except the three representatives of the Administrative Committee emphatically urged the discontinuance of the proceedings. I pointed out that a victory for the Administration under those circumstances would be a defeat for Zionism. No ~~respectable~~ respectable person will want to have anything to do with the movement.



The Administrative Committee met immediately afterwards and decided to ask for an adjournment of a day, so as to be in a position to give further thought as to whether or not it shall press the continuance of the hearings. Just before I left Judge Lezansky took me aside to tell me that he was determined to go through with the trial, so as to insure a thorough housecleaning. I advised instead a temporary suspension of the hearings so as to give the Committee on Peace and Reconstruction a chance to work out the necessary reforms without arousing a scandal in Zionism.

These negotiations apart, I cannot help feeling that the whole Zionist movement has thus far turned out to be a moral failure. If at the head of the movement in this country you have men, one of whom is a male prostitute, another a usurer, a third guilty of larceny and the president himself signing a note as president of the ZOA to a private loan in a usurious bank in order to bribe into silence (he admitted) an outspoken opponent, is it not ridiculous to hope that such a movement can make for moral and spiritual regeneration? I hope I am not a puritanical prig, but I certainly cannot endure hearing such pretentious claims being made for a movement that simply affords an opportunity for a few more glib-tongued Jews to exploit their people. I certainly do not want to be a party to such hypocrisy.

Before I went to the meeting yesterday Abe Goldberg, the Yiddish writer and president of the Histadrut called. He had come directly from a meeting of the Z. Administrative Committee of which he is a member. He is one of the individuals referred to in the preceding paragraph as responsible for my present disgust with the Zionist movement. I was particularly wary this time in my talk with him. He came for the purpose of persuading me to get the committee



to adopt a plan of organization as a counter to the suggestion made by both Hadassah and the Opposition to substitute a commission form of government in the ZOA. He advised a praesidium of three chairmen, Lipsky of the Administ. Comm., Wise of the Exec. and a non-~~partisan~~ partisan of a third representative body. It was only when he suggested that disruption of the Hadassan at the coming convention that I forgot myself for a moment and told him that such disruption would destroy the last shred of good will for the present administration.

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Sunday, June 24, 1928

As a result of a protracted hearing of the charges against the administration brought by the Opposition group which is represented by Abr. Tulin, the committee of judges were convinced that the methods which had hitherto been in vogue in Zionist activities must be put a stop to and a complete reorganization effected. They therefore decided that they would adjourn the hearings for the purpose of giving the committee of nine which they appointed a chance to work out a plan of reconstruction which if accepted by those in control of the coming convention they would refrain from exposing the rottenness in the present administration. The committee of nine consists of the following: Judge Mack, Tulin and Mrs. Robt. Szold (of the Opposition), Judge Lewis, Morris Rothenberg and Dr. Koliski (of the Administration) and Dr. Louis I. Harris, Dr. Pool and myself (of the peace group). I was not present at the hearing which took place last Tuesday night and lasted to 3:00 A.M. Poor Lipsky went through hell.

Last Thursday night the entire peace group met at the SAJ House to decide what attitude to take with regard to Lipsky. It was the unanimous opinion of those present including Emanuel Neumann and Spragregen who are by no means friendly disposed toward him, that while he cannot be considered for the presidency he should not



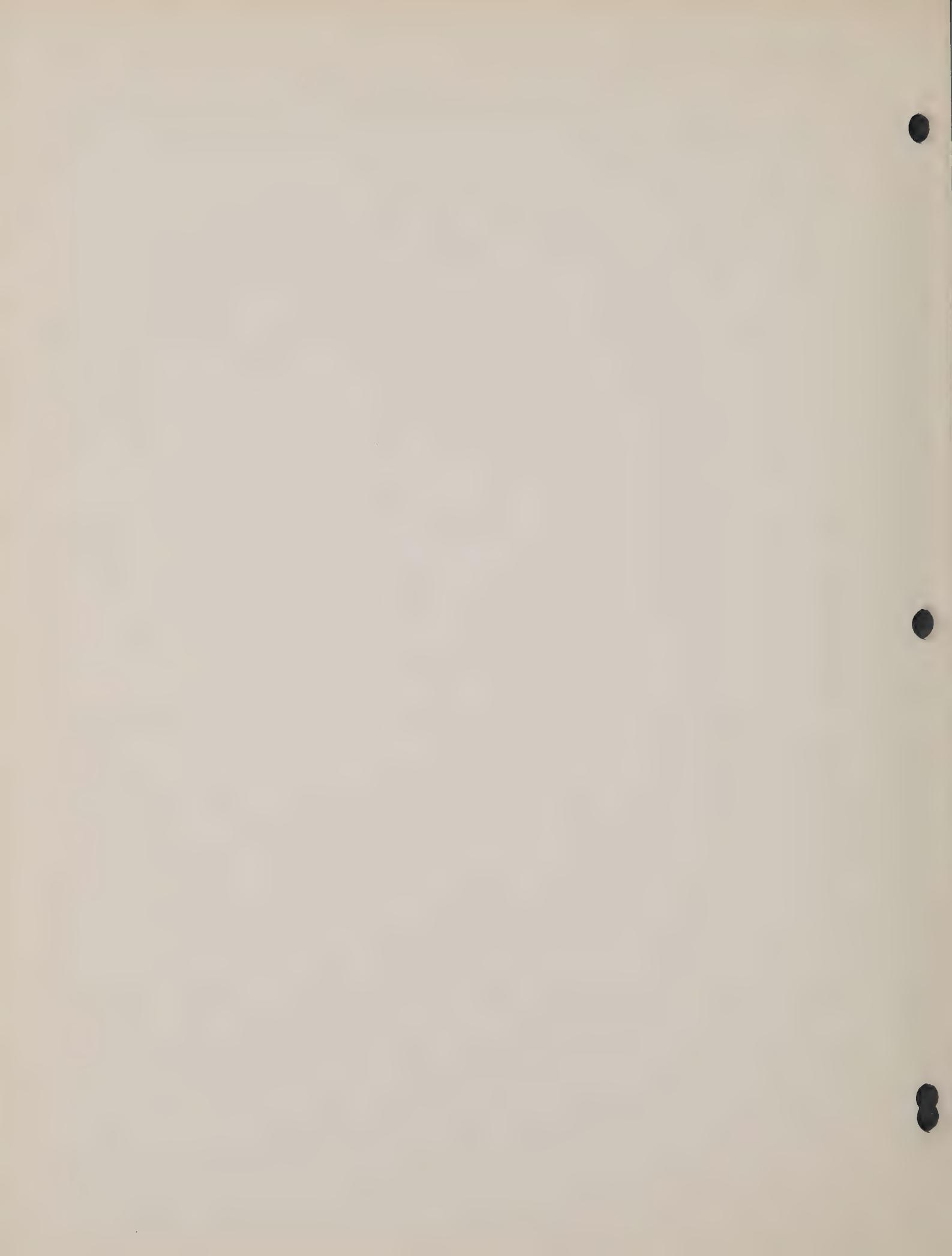
be altogether shelved.

On Friday I received the following cable from Dr. Weizmann: Confidential Agency commission concluded its work good results best possible spirit. My only misgiving if owing tactics opposition in American Lipsky situation endangered and an administration hostile to world Zionist policies and agency established results obtained agency commission after many years endeavor will be seriously endangered work in Palestine and position World Zionist Organization becomes impossible. As personally pointed out repeatedly Opposition aim not only administration america but wishes overthrow whole Zionist structure. cannot and won't interfere with questions submitted to enquiry but urge you not allow purely formal matters to be exploited and utilized for destruction highest interests movement cannot sufficiently emphasize responsibility which rests with you this critical moment and my implicit confidence in you please cable Shalom Weizmann

My reply was:

Judges insist Lipsky impossible as president Peace committee determined to uphold World "ionist policies and agency.

Last night the committee of nine met at the SAJ House. The meeting opened at 8:45. I was designated chairman. Tulin was about to make a statement about Lipsky's elimination when Rothenberg and Maliski interrupted him and said that they were authorized by Lipsky to say that for the sake of peace he withdraws from candidacy for any place in the administration of next year. That settled the Lipsky matter. We then took up the plan of reorganization. Mack read a statement which had been worked out by the Opposition group. At the end of that statement there was a declaration of loyalty to World Zionist organization and policies and of support of the agency. What the committee divided on was the question whether the body of



150 now called Executive Committee shall be changed into an advisory council or continue to exercise power over the administrative board which all agreed shall henceforth consist of no more than nine members. The main fear of the opposition is that such an Executive committee might sabotage the work of the administrative board, since it is to be expected that so drastic a resolution would necessarily leave behind considerable sullenness. When we got to an impasse I postponed for a time the vote on the question and took up the question of personnel. Here the ticklish proposition was whether or not Mack should go on the Administrative Board. The Opposition group (not only those present*) put him forward much against his will as the only candidate representing its views and would not be content with any one else of their side. Harris and ~~Rabbin~~ Poole ~~Kapernick~~ representing the peace group, argued that it would be difficult to get the convention to elect Mack especially in view of the certainty that he would come to be chairman of the Administrative Board, if elected as member of the Board. When I saw that we were not making any headway I got my committee to compromise on Mack provided we got from him the promise to stand by the statement he had made at the Washington Conference not to run for presidency and to interpret it as including chairmanship of the Board. From that time on we made progress and worked out the following slate. Judge Mack, to be in charge of political questions, Julius (?) Simon, economic affairs, Dr. Harris, Dr. I Wechsler (for cultural work) Siegel, for financial matters, Abe Liebovitz, Treasurer, Judge Lewis, Sam Rottenberg of Brooklyn (if he will accept) and a woman to be named by the Adassan. They were going to name me for cultural work but I held out and refused to yield.



Tuesday, June 26, 1928

The Rabbinic Assembly began its sessions yesterday at Long Branch. I am scheduled to read a paper tomorrow on Judaism as a Civilization, which by the way, I consented to do only after a great deal of pleading on the part of Tevitsky who had arranged the program. Although I could stay only for part of the sessions yesterday I considered it proper to come even for a little while. Moreover I had to report to the committee on Law my opinion on the question put by Jacob Kohn concerning the possibility of circumventing the law prohibiting a rabbi who is a "Kohen" from officiating at funerals. From my own point of view any attempt to keep alive the institution of the "Kehunah" is ridiculous, but in order to act in ~~unison~~ with the other members of the Law Committee I was willing to discover some loophole that would justify us in abrogating the prohibition in such a way as not to constitute an absolute break with the tradition concerning ritual impurity. This necessitated my going to the rabbinic sources dealing with the question. I certainly got a thrill from the first hand contact with the Jewish legalistic literature, and I realized what a joy it would have been to me and others who are similarly minded if we had occasion to go to Jewish sources to arrive at decisions that really counted instead of such a decision of such trivial importance.

The peace efforts of the Committee on Peace and Reconstruction have been frustrated by the Shylockian attitude of the opposition group and the intransigent attitude of the administrative group.

I rather like Commissioner Harris. He is a politician but not of the scheming type.

The lesson which my experience with the Peace committee should teach me is that I must learn to say no, when I asked to undertake anything which is infeasible.

